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PURGATORY; .

Doctrinally, Practically, and Historically Opened.

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY ALEXANDER MCKENZIE, D. D.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

A. 1895

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE yielded to the desire of the author that I would write a few words as an Introduction to this work. I cannot think that a book whose theme is of so general interest, and which has been so seldom treated with any detail, or with any approach to completeness, needs anything beyond itself to commend it to thoughtful readers. If there were such necessity, it is not for me to meet it. I am compelled to turn to the book for my own enlightenment, rather than with any hope of making a substantial addition to the information which it is designed to present. The protracted study and investigation of the author, with his characteristic acuteness of thought and of statement, prepare the reader to be at once instructed and interested.

So long as we see men passing out of the world, and stand with strained and tearful eyes watching them as they vanish beyond our sight, so long as we ourselves are hastening into the land which stretches far away from us and from which there is no return, will it be a question of intensest interest into what estate and condition of life men enter when they have gone hence and are not here any more. We ask with an earnestness which is deeper and more sacred than curiosity, and "there comes no answer of reply." Centuries of questioning, ages of longing, have added nothing to our knowledge. If we have learned more of the origin of man, we have gained nothing which explains his destiny. All that we know comes not by study, but by revelation. God has

spoken by the prophets. The Son of God has come from the world beyond, and, incarnate among us, has told us of that which is and is to be. He has taught us all that we need for our present governance. He has declared the will of God, and with that our duty and the issues of our life. We are assured of man's eternal being, and that whatsoever a man sows, being here, that shall he reap, being there. To make our endless years into a life of righteousness and blessedness, the Lord has come into the world, lived here, died, risen, ascended, and now makes intercession, until he shall come again and receive his own unto himself. This is our simple and practical faith. We have enough knowledge for duty and for hope. It would have been well if men had been content with that which is clearly revealed. This is more than could be expected. Man knows too much not to wish to know more. We tenderly repeat the words of solace and of promise, "Until He come;" and while the words linger on our lips the heart frames again the questions so long asked, so long unanswered, When? When will He come? What shall be till the day dawns; till the throne is set and the Lord comes with his angels? It is clear that the first Christians expected the speedy return of the Lord. It was not long to wait for the consummation of all things. When they found that his coming was delayed, they knew not for how long, out of the delay sprang the ardent inquiry, Where, then, are the departed saints whose glory awaits his return? The question still remains, If there is to be a day of resurrection, when all who are in their graves shall come forth; if there is to be a day of judgment, when all shall give account for the deeds done in the body, in what condition are they living who have gone from this world, leaving the body in the grave, and waiting for that day of wonder and of triumph for the saints? It is in vain that we

put aside the inquiry. It is almost equally in vain that we attempt to answer it. Every man has asked it. Every minister has had the question put to him, and has been sad as the disappointed questioner turned away from him. We must wait. The day comes when we shall know. To-day's duty is enough for to-day's moments.

The doctrine of Purgatory is an attempt to answer the question. It has been put to other and to base uses, but it had its place in a scheme of knowledge which claimed to overleap the boundaries between the worlds. In its simplest form the doctrine is not to be held up to scorn. Too many intelligent and devout hearts have believed it. The absurd forms which it has assumed, the ridiculous accretions which have gathered about it, should not blind us to the principle which lies underneath the belief. But even that principle we are not able to receive. It has no authority which commends it to the Protestant mind. Nor does it lessen the number or diminish the urgency of our inquiries. It raises new difficulties. It darkens counsel. The profound questions of the soul are not satisfied. The doctrine of the Resurrection is not illumined. Through all its superstitions, past even its clearest suggestions, we return to the words of Christ and his apostles, to find that which we can at least believe; which commends itself to our conscience and our hope; which gives us courage to wait until we know. The Reformation did well, a work of light and of liberty, when it swept away this whole fabric and brought men face to face with the Word of God.

It cannot be without advantage that we review the rise and the course of this doctrine of purgatory under the guidance of the writer whose pages are now before us. It is right that he should examine and judge the doctrine in its historic development and in its present form. It is fair to use its absurdi-

ties against its principles. It is wholesome for the reader to see how far and into how wild paths speculation may be led when it wanders away from that which is revealed, into that which for the present is unknown. It is good to be brought back to the Word of God and to be set in new content among its teachings and its promises. That will be the end of the book.

With these words of introduction I leave the reader to the author. He will lay aside the book wiser than when he takes it in hand, with a larger sense of the greatness of the themes of which this work treats but one, and of the discontent which must follow the study of them in the present light; let it be hoped also with a devout willingness that the secret things should wait God's day of fuller revelation, while the things which are already revealed receive a prompt and cheerful belief and obedience.

ALEXANDER McKENZIE.

CAMPOBELLO, N. B., Aug. 14, 1882.

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PURGATORY.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

THE Doctrine of Purgatory is interwoven with the entire Papal System, and modifies all the other tenets of this Church. It follows the devout Romanist with a power that pertains to no other dogma, for it touches him in those points where man feels most deeply—his dread of suffering, and affection for kindred and friends. If one within the holy communion of Rome incline to be irreverent, disobedient, contumacious or heretical, the practical application of this doctrine is the extremest veto power of the hierarchy. It not only traces him through all the ways of his erring life with admonition and check, but at his dying bed it points him significantly to approaching sufferings such as language can but poorly set forth.

Claiming to be the successors of the apostles and the vicegerents of God in the prerogative of forgiving sins, the priests have used this doctrine as the great Key of St. Peter in opening and shutting the door of

heaven. There is a terrible power in it when brought to bear on an ignorant, or a sensitive conscience, and that power is obtained and applied by appeal to all that we shrink from in anguish, and to all that is endearing and tender in the ties of affection.

What Mosheim says of the power and use of this doctrine in the tenth century will apply with but little variation to the practical workings of it in any age or community. "The fire which burns out the stains remaining on human souls after death was an object of intense dread to all, nay, was more feared than the punishments of hell. For the latter, it was supposed, might be easily escaped, if they only died rich in the prayers and merits of the priests, or had some saint to intercede for them. But not so the former. And the priests, perceiving this dread to conduce much to their advantage, endeavored by their discourses, and by fables and fictitious miracles, continually to raise it higher and higher."*

It is proposed in this treatise to present a systematic collection of the statements, principles and illustrations of the doctrine of Purgatory, as held formerly and in our own times, but specially in our own times, by the Roman-catholic Church.

The uses of this doctrine in the United States are fully illustrated from American authors, well accredited by American Archbishops and Bishops. Indeed, one peculiarity of this work is a total reliance on well-known and officially approbated Papal writings, about

* Eccl. His. Cent. X. Part II. ch. 3.

forty being quoted. The book is not controversial, theological or argumentative, but simply historical, that this leading, compacting and pivotal doctrine in the Papal system of faith and practice may be well understood. And it is believed that no candid Romanist will take serious exception to the collated historical statement of the doctrine in its principles and uses, or to the tone and manner in which it is done.

As Romanism is putting forth anew its special claims and prerogatives, perhaps it will not prove an ill-timed service to the Church and the State, particularly in America, to present authoritatively from their side, and totally, this central dogma. Its relations to the physical sciences and to psychology, as well as to morals and theology, as held and taught commonly in the nineteenth and not the twelfth century, will be appreciated by the studious reader.

Moreover, it is believed that no doctrine within the Christian area, holding the faith of so many, and aspiring to the faith of so many more, is in waiting, like this, for explanatory and practical and historical unfolding. With all our books, at least in English, it is thought that the place for a round treatise on this topic is yet wanting its book. The more is the wonder, when it is considered how much Protestants have to do with this doctrine practically and socially and civilly.

The genealogy or genetic exposition of the general doctrine of purgatory, as held before Christian times, claims a large space in the book. For since the Scrip-

tures are so barren of material for this elaborate system, it seemed good to look up the sources whence it came. Therefore the eschatology of the ancient Egyptians, Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, and Romans has been analyzed and reproduced as to the point in hand. The same may be said of the Gnostic and Manichæan systems of religion, that so environed and struggled to permeate young Christianity.

In this gleaning of the ancients concerning the punitive state of their dead, the author finds that he has prematurely and unconsciously written on one of the leading topics of the day within the field of divine government and religious theories, namely, Future Punishment. The historical digest thus made, for another purpose, furnishes a fair statement of the views of the ancient religionists on this now popular question. Here is, therefore, a well-defined background prepared by the reason and philosophy and anticipation of uninspired men, to which the Christian inquirer should add all and only what inspiration has added, while bringing life and immortality into the light.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY STATED.

A STATEMENT of The Doctrine of Purgatory can be best made only in the language of those who believe and teach and practise it. We quote, therefore, definitions and expositions of it from catechisms, canons, manuals and creeds that have been officially adopted or accredited by the Papal Church. The first quotations made will show the doctrine as held and practised to-day, and in our own neighborhoods.

Müller says that at death every soul goes "either to purgatory, or to heaven, or to hell." They go to purgatory "who leave this world without having fully paid the debt of temporal punishment due to their sins, the guilt of which has been forgiven by the sacrament of penance." There they "suffer for a time on account of their sins." "Because it cannot be supposed that those who die suddenly have either the time or the dispositions necessary to atone for all their faults, therefore the divine goodness has made a place in the world to come, in which the soul is cleansed from his little faults and imperfections."*

* Familiar Explanations of Christian Doctrine. By Rev. M. Müller; approbated by J. R. Bayley, Archbishop of Baltimore. Catholic Publication Society, 1875.

Purgatory is "a middle state of souls suffering for a time on account of their sins." Such souls go there "when they die in less sins, which we call venial; or when they have not satisfied the justice of God for former transgressions."*

Purgatory is "a place in the other life, where some souls suffer for a time before they can go to heaven." All go there "who die indebted to God's justice on account of mortal sin."†

The Papal Church "knows that a temporal punishment frequently remains due to the sinner, after the guilt of his crime has been remitted. . . . She knows that frequently her children are summoned from life with part of this penalty unpaid, and that they endure a purgation, therefore, in the other world until, being no longer debtors to justice, they shall be made partakers of mercy, and having paid the last farthing, they shall enter into the glory of the Lord."‡

In the Douay Catechism we find the following: "Whither go such as die in venial sin, or not having fully satisfied for the punishment due to their mortal sins? To purgatory, till they have made full satisfaction for them, and then to heaven."

"A middle state of souls who depart this life in

* Boston Catechism. For the use of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Boston. Boston, Patrick Donahoe, 1873.

† Butler's Catechism; Revised, Enlarged, Improved and Recommended by the four Roman-catholic Archbishops of Ireland, and by The Right Rev. Dr. Kenrick of Philadelphia. New York, 1847; Boston, 1873.

‡ Dr. England's Garden of the Soul: A Manual of Papal Doctrines, Forms and Devotions. With the Approbation of the Right Rev. Dr. Hughes. Pp. 63, 64. See also pp. 36, 84, 265-280 and 305. New York, 1847.

God's grace, yet not without some lesser stains or guilt of punishment which retard them from entering heaven."*

"A middle state of souls suffering for a time on account of their sins."†

"There is a place distinct from hell and from paradise, called Purgatory, because in it those souls are purified which die in a state of grace, yet have not satisfied in their life the punishment of the sins, either venial but not yet remitted, or mortal and already pardoned." "They do not come out thence without having first entirely paid to divine justice the punishment corresponding to their guilt."‡

"Constanter teneo purgatorium esse, animasque ibi detentas fidelium suffragiis juvari."§

The words of the Council of Trent, run thus:

"Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient traditions of the fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this œcumenical synod, that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful, but chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, the holy synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently

* The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, Contained in the Profession of faith by Pope Pius IX. P. 47. Dunigan & Brother, New York, 1855.

† Sunday-school Manual. Approved by Benedict, Bishop of Boston. P. 17. Patrick Donahoe, Boston, 1843.

‡ Purgatory Opened to the Piety of the Faithful; or The Month of November. With the Approbation of the Most Rev. John Hughes, D. D., Archbishop of New York. Pp. 15, 22. Dunigan & Brother, 1855.

§ Creed of Pius IV. A. D. 1560-65.

strive that the sound doctrine touching purgatory, delivered by the holy fathers and sacred councils, be believed, held, taught and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful in Christ.”*

This Decree was passed on the last night of the last session of the last ecclesiastical council of the Church of Rome, Dec. 3, 1563. It is therefore not only supreme, but the last authorized statement of that church.

The Catholicism of this council is more specific than its Decree: “*Est purgatorius ignis, quo piorum animæ, ad definitum tempus cruciatæ, expiantur, ut eis in æternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coinquinatum ingreditur.*”†

“The Catholic doctrine concerning purgatory may be briefly stated thus: That Almighty God has appointed in the next world a third place, which is neither heaven nor hell, but a middle place as it is called, in which certain souls, who will in the end go to heaven, are for a while detained.

“We believe that some souls, the souls of little children, for instance, who have been made members of Christ’s church by holy baptism; or of others who, by God’s grace, have been enabled to preserve through life the purity and innocence of children; or of others, again, who, by the help of the same grace, have by their sufferings, or acts of voluntary penance satisfied God’s justice for the temporal pun-

* Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. Twenty-fifth Session. Buckley’s Translation.

† Part II., De Symb. 5.

ishment due for the sins of their past life, are received by Almighty God, as soon as they have left the body, into the enjoyment of everlasting bliss.

“In like manner, we believe that there are other souls which pass at once out of this world into the realms of everlasting torment in the next.

“But we believe also that there are many others which, although not destined to receive eternal punishment, are yet not fit for immediate admission into that place into which ‘there shall not enter anything that is defiled.’ For when we consider the carelessness of the majority of men, their want of rigid self-examination, and blindness to their own faults, we can readily understand how the multitude of ordinary good persons may commit a thousand sins—not indeed grievous sins, yet sins for which they have to render an account in the day of judgment, such as ‘idle words,’ for example—for which they never feel compunction, nor ask the forgiveness of God.

“Concerning many souls, therefore, although we dare not hope that at the moment of their passage out of this world they are so free from all spot and stain of sin as to be ready to pass immediately into the presence of that Being who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, there to dwell with him at once and for ever; yet we feel confident that they have departed in the grace and favor of God, and that their everlasting lot, therefore, will not be cast among liars and blasphemers and idolaters. And we believe that the mercy and justice of God, in his dealings with

these souls, are reconciled by their being detained for a certain time in a middle place, there to be punished and purified, and dealt with according to his good pleasure until he sees fit to admit them to the enjoyment of that beatific vision which is life and bliss everlasting.

“It is also a part of Catholic belief that even when Almighty God has forgiven sin and justified the repentant sinner, so that he is once more in a state of grace, he still reserves the infliction of some degree of punishment for his transgressions, as we see in the instance of the royal penitent David. . . . He yet reserves some smaller punishments to be undergone by the sinner, either in this world or the next. . . . And when we speak of souls being purified by the sufferings of Purgatory, we mean, not that they are thus cleansed from the guilt of their sins, but only that they are paying this debt of punishment. . . . Those souls who leave this life with venial sins unrepented of, obtain the remission of the guilt of them by the first act of contrition and love which they make on their separation from the body. But since that act is the effect of the pure bounty of God, and is not performed in a state of probation, it is just that they should suffer for their neglect in not repenting before death.”*

* The Clifton Tracts. Published under the Sanction of the Bishop of Clifton, Cardinal Wiseman, and Republished with the Approbation of the Most Rev. John Hughes, D. D., Archbishop of New York. Tract No. 10. Purgatory. Dunigan & Brother, New York, 1856.

We are informed in the Introduction that these tracts, thirty-seven of

There is, perhaps, no better authority on this point than the Rev. Dr. John Milner. He says:

"There are some venial or pardonable sins, for the expiation of which, as well as for the temporary punishment due to other sins, a place of temporary punishment is provided in the next life; where, however, the souls detained may be relieved by the prayers, alms and sacrifices of the faithful here on earth.

"Oh, how consoling are the belief and practice of Catholics in this matter, compared with those of Protestants! The latter show their regard for their departed friends in costly pomp and feathered pageantry, while their burial service is a cold, disconsolate ceremony; and as to any further communication with the deceased, when the grave closes on their remains, they do not so much as imagine any.

"On the other hand, we Catholics know that death itself cannot dissolve the communion of saints which subsists in our church, nor prevent an intercourse of kind, and often beneficial offices, between us and our departed friends. Oftentimes we can help them more effectually, in the other world, by our prayers, our sacrifices, our alms-deeds, than we could in this by any temporary benefits we could bestow upon them."*

them, were prepared "with the encouraging sanction of all the Catholic Bishops of England," and "that his Holiness the Pope, unsolicited, was graciously pleased to send them [the authors] his benediction upon the work."

* End of Controversy. Letter XLIII.

On the fact of a purgatory we find a wider statement as to the time when it was instituted. While nothing is declared, we are left to infer that the middle state of souls opened with the other two. The following suggests this: "Before the birth of Jesus, purgatory existed for those souls which were condemned to it for not having fully satisfied the punishment due to sin. And that for these sacrifices and prayers were offered, it will suffice, among the many texts of Scripture which prove it, to adduce the fact described in the second book of Maccabees, where mention is made of the pious collection of twelve thousand silver drachmæ, equivalent to about three hundred pounds of our money, which Judas sent to Jerusalem to get sacrifices offered in the temple for the sins of the deceased soldiers."*

* *Purgatory Opened: or The Month of November. Consecrated to the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory.* With the Approbation of the Most Rev. John Hughes, D. D., Archbishop of New York. Pp. 15, 16. Dunigan & Brother, New York, 1855.

CHAPTER III.

PURGATORY AS A PLACE.

HAVING fully stated the Doctrine of Purgatory, and in the words of its defenders, we now pass to some notices of the Place. It is true, the learned and cautious Dr. Alexander Natalis says that nothing certain is known of the location of Purgatory. But we shall see that the leading papal writers, ancient and modern, do enter into delineations, topographical and more or less minute, of the interior and local arrangements of purgatory. This is what we should expect. For the doctrine fails of the end for which it was introduced into the Roman Church, unless the pains and penalties and horrors of purgatory are so located and depicted as to work strongly on the fears of transgressors, and on the sympathies of those who may suppose they have friends there.

Nor must any one suppose that the materialism, the grossness, or the absurdity of the location and its arrangements and delineations would destroy the credibility and utility of the doctrine. For the absurdity of the local descriptions has usually corresponded to the ignorance and superstition of the age and region.

Then, as is well known, papal policy and teaching

discard reason and philosophy where their exercise endangers a dogma of the church. Moreover, a vast majority of any Roman-catholic population, specially in papal countries, gives unlimited confidence to the teachings of the priests. As in the dark ages, so in the purely papal communities of to-day, as Italy, Spain and Mexico, no representation of the doctrine is so repulsive to sense and reason that the mass will not believe it. Taylor sets forth correctly this confidence of the multitude in their priesthood, and the way in which this doctrine has gained credence.

"We do not think that the wise men in the Church of Rome believed these narratives; for if they did, they were not wise. But this we know, that by such stories, the people now brought into a belief of it, and having served their turn of them, the master-builders used them as false arches and centries, taking them away when the parts of the building were made firm and stable by authority. But even the better sort of them do believe them, or else they do worse, for they urge and cite the Dialogues of St. Gregory," etc.*

"Purgatory," says Bellarmine, "is a certain place, in which, as if in a prison, souls are purged after this life which have not been fully purged in it, in order that, thus purged, they may be enabled to enter heaven, which nothing defiled shall enter." Dr. Alexander Natalis, of the Sorbonne, who flourished in the latter half of the seventeenth century, is not

* Dissuasives from Popery. Part I. chap. I. § IV.

clear where the place may be, but that there is such a place he assumes and declares. "It is not determined concerning the place, whether it be in this world, or upon earth, or in the dark air where the devils are, or in the hell of the damned, or in some place underneath, nearer the earth, that the souls are purged."

It would seem that while the doctrine lay in a crude and ill-defined state in some minds, the location was not determined by common consent, and so the subjects of these pains were scattered through the world, as prisoners at large. The following examples will illustrate this fact. They are taken from a very ancient Catholic work, entitled, "*Speculum Exemplorum*," being quoted by Taylor in his *Disuasives from Popery*.

"A certain priest, in an ecstasy, saw the soul of Constantius, Turritanus in the eaves of his house tormented with frosts and cold rains, and afterwards climbing up to heaven upon a shining pillow. And a certain monk saw some souls roasted upon spits like pigs, and some devils basting them with scalding lard. But a while after they were carried to a cool place. . . . Bishop Theobald, standing upon a piece of ice to cool his feet, was nearer to purgatory than he was aware, and was convinced of it when he heard a poor soul telling him that under that ice he was tormented; and that he should be delivered if for thirty days continual he would say for him thirty masses. And some such thing was seen by Conrade

and Ulderic in a pool of water, for the place of purgatory was not yet resolved on.”*

Concerning the locality of purgatory the church has not made any formal decision. The schoolmen, however, have found a place for it in their division of the interior of the earth. Here they make four compartments; Hell, for those for ever damned; Limbus Puerorum, for children who died without baptism; Limbus Patrum, for godly men who died before Christ; and Purgatory, for Christians yet suffering punishment, though certain of heaven.

In process of time not only was purgatory determined as a locality, but its topography and architectural arrangements. In the sixteenth century the Spanish priests and monks shrewdly assigned graded apartments to purgatory, agreeing with the social grades in community. Of these they made eight, in those abodes of sorrow, as for kings; for princes; for grandees; for noblemen; for merchants; for ladies of quality; for the wives of tradesmen; and for the poor common people. According to this scale the poor suffer the least, and the suffering increases with the rank, till we come to kings. Here is a net spread with meshes for all. There is an *ad valorem* assignment according as those in the several departments are able to pay for relief.

Of course, to give anything like Scriptural proof or coloring to these notions about purgatorial regions, the greatest possible use was made of any passage of

* Dissuasives from Popery. Part I. ch. I. § IV.

Scripture that could be put into service. Such liberty was taken with St. Paul's statement of the vision of a certain one caught up to the third heaven. Among the manuscripts of Trinity College Library, Oxford, there is a short relation entitled: "*Visio Sancti Pauli Apostoli de Pœnis Purgatorii.*" It was, perhaps, a work of the twelfth century, when such legends were most popular and profitable. At the entrance of purgatory St. Paul saw growing fiery trees, on which people were hanging by their different members, as by their tongues, eyes, or hair, according to the crimes they had committed on earth. Within was a great furnace with a dreadful fire, and beyond it a fiery lake. After having witnessed the operations of purgatory, he was taken to paradise to see the condition of the saints. By the intercession of St. Paul and the angels, the torments of the damned are remitted every week from Saturday evening to Monday morning.*

"Where this place is, and if there is any suspension or interval of punishment allowed to it, is not expressly determined, says the Angelic Doctor, in the Scriptures. It is probable that it is not far from hell, and that the just souls are purged with the same fire as that with which the damned are tortured in hell."†

In a work by Bellarmine, recently, if not still, a

* *St. Patrick's Purgatory; An Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, current during the Middle Ages.* By Thomas Wright, Esq., London, 1844.

† The Month of November. P. 17.

handbook on papal doctrines at Rome, we find the following:

“Hell is the lowest and deepest place in the world, that is, the centre of the earth; and thus Scripture in many places contrasts heaven with hell, as the highest place with the lowest. But in this depth of the earth there are four, as it were, very great caverns: one for the damned, which is the deepest of all; and thus it is fit that the proud demons, and the men their followers, should be in the lowest place, and as far from paradise as can be found. In the second cavern, which is somewhat higher, are those souls who suffer the pains of purgatory. In the third, which is also a little higher, are the souls of those children who have died without baptism, the which do not suffer the torments of fire, but only the perpetual privation of eternal happiness. In the fourth, which is the highest of all, were the souls of the patriarchs and prophets and other saints who died before the coming of Christ. For although those holy souls had nothing to be purged of, nevertheless they could not enter the blessed glory before Christ, by his death, had opened the gates of eternal life.” This fourth apartment is “the bosom of Abraham.”*

The author of this declaration—the preëminent controversial teacher of Romanism—the recent date of the re-publication, and the place where it is used as the Catechism of Christian Doctrine make it an ultimate authority on the location of purgatory.

* *Dottrina Cristiana, Breve.* Rome, 1839.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEORY OF PURGATORIAL SUFFERINGS.

THE ground for this imprisonment and suffering in purgatory may be briefly stated. The most clear as well as most recent exposition of the theory of purgatorial pains is found in Müller. We extract passages enough for a full and candid statement, from a book having the imprimatur of Joannes Josephus, Episcopus. Boston.

“Let us imagine a soul on the point of leaving this world in perfect charity with God. . . . That soul, no doubt, will immediately be admitted into the presence and enjoyment of God. . . . If, on the contrary, a soul leaves this world in disgrace with God, and dead to him by the guilt of mortal sin, that soul will undoubtedly be condemned to hell. . . . But when a soul leaves this world in the friendship of God, yet sullied with the stains of venial sins and imperfections, or without having fully satisfied the divine justice for the debt of temporal punishment due for her smaller sins, or for her more grievous sins, whose guilt has already been forgiven in the sacrament of penance, it is plain that such a soul cannot, in that state, go to heaven, where ‘nothing defiled can enter;’ neither can it be condemned to hell, because it is in friendship with God and a

living member of Jesus Christ. Therefore there must be some middle state where such a soul is confined for a time, till, by suffering, it is cleansed and purged from all these defilements of venial sins, and rendered fit to be admitted to the presence and enjoyment of God. . . . This place cannot be heaven; for no sin can enter there to be forgiven; it cannot be hell, for in hell there is no forgiveness; therefore it must be in a middle place, distinct from both. Neither can these sins which are forgiven in the next life be mortal sins, for a soul that dies in mortal sin is immediately condemned to hell, like the rich glutton in the gospel. Therefore it is only venial sins from which the soul is purged in purgatory.”*

“The souls in purgatory are holy souls. They are confirmed in grace, and no longer in a condition to offend God, or to forfeit heaven. They love God above everything; all their disorderly affections and passions have died away, and as they love God, so are they loved by him in an unutterable manner. For this reason our Lord wishes that they should be united to him as soon as possible; but as he is a God most holy and most just, his holiness and justice forbid him to admit them into the city of the heavenly Jerusalem before their indebtedness to his divine justice has been fully discharged, either by their own sufferings, or by the prayers and good works of their brethren on earth.”†

* *Charity to the Souls in Purgatory.* By Michael Müller, C. SS. R., Boston. Patrick Donahoe, 1872, pp. 5-10.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96. See also pp. 118, 134, 141.

And this is but an enlargement of an earlier statement: "Purgatory is a middle state of souls who depart this life in God's grace, yet not without some lesser stains or guilt of punishment which retard them from entering heaven." "What sort of Christians then go to purgatory? First. Such as die guilty of lesser sins, which we commonly call venial, as many Christians do who either by sudden death or otherwise are taken out of this life before they have repented of their ordinary failings. Secondly, such as have been formerly guilty of greater sins, and have not made full satisfaction for them to the divine justice."*

On this theory of suffering, making purgatory necessary, his Eminence, Cardinal Wiseman, is not only very high, but very recent authority. A few passages from him will close this chapter.

"We believe that sin is forgiven, and can be forgiven, by God alone; we believe, moreover, that in the interior justification of the sinner, it is only God that has any part; for it is only through his grace as the instrument, and through the redemption of Christ as the origin of grace and forgiveness, that justification can be wrought. And, in fact, no fasting, no prayers, no alms-deeds, no work that we can conceive to be done by man, however protracted, however extensive or rigorous they may be, can, according to the Catholic

* The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, contained in the Profession of Faith published by Pope Pius IX, p. 47. Dunigan & Brother, New York, 1855. Dublin, 1838.

doctrine, have the most infinitesimal weight for obtaining the remission of sin, or of the eternal punishment allotted to it. This constitutes the essence of forgiveness, of justification, and in it we hold that man of himself has no power. . . . We believe that upon this forgiveness of sins, that is, after the remission of that eternal debt which God in his justice awards to transgressions against his law, he has been pleased to reserve a certain degree of inferior or temporary punishment, appropriate to the guilt which had been incurred ; and it is on this part of the punishment alone that, according to the Catholic doctrine, satisfaction can be made to God. . . . It is only with regard to the reserved degree of temporal punishment that we believe the Christian can satisfy the justice of God.” “Is it God’s ordinance that when he has forgiven sin, and so justified the sinner as to place him once more in a state of grace, he still reserves the infliction of some degree of punishment for his transgressions? We say that undoubtedly it is.” “God, after the remission of sin, retains a lesser chastisement in his power, to be inflicted on the sinner. Penitential works, fasting, alms-deeds, contrite weeping, and fervent prayer have the power of averting that punishment.”*

It will be noticed that this theory of lesser chastisements and this aversion of certain punishments apply only to true Christians, regenerated and justified

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church. By His Eminence, Cardinal Wiseman. Dublin, 1867, pp. 338, 343.

ones, who are assured of salvation. These punishments of the inferior and temporary kind, and that the children of God only are liable to, are those which the priests are supposed to have power to remit. In other words, the papal theory of absolution, whether taking effect here or in purgatory, has to do only with the children of God ; and by "the power of the keys," it is left to the judgment of father confessors to say how, and when, and to what extent, these punishments may be remitted. And the Cardinal says, that in the exercise of this power, and discharge of this duty, they have obliged the poor penitents "to lie prostrate for a certain term of months or years before the doors of the church," and sometimes "until they were at the point of death."*

Passing along to the principal topic of our inquiries, Dr. Wiseman says, "From this subject of satisfaction, I naturally proceed to the consideration of another topic intimately connected with it, the Catholic doctrine of purgatory . . . which follows as a consequence or corollary from that of which I have just treated; so much so that the Catholic doctrine of satisfaction would be incomplete without it. The idea that God requires satisfaction, and will punish sin, would not go to its furthest and necessary consequence, if we did not believe that the sinner may be so punished in another world as not to be wholly and eternally cast away from God. . . . I am at a loss to conceive what

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, p. 345.

can be considered in it repugnant to the justice of God or to the ordinary ways of Providence; what can be found therein opposed to the moral law in the remotest degree. . . . A middle and temporary state, in which those who are not sufficiently guilty for the severer condemnation, nor sufficiently pure to enjoy the vision of His face, are for a time punished and purged, so as to be qualified for this blessing.”*

“Suppose that a Christian dies who has committed some slight transgression; he cannot enter heaven in this state, and yet we cannot suppose that he is to be condemned for ever. What alternative, then, are we to admit? Why, that there is some place in which the soul will be purged of sin and qualified to enter into the glory of God.”†

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, pp. 347-348.

† Ibid., p. 352.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURE OF THE SUFFERINGS IN PURGATORY.

THE papal Church has never been able to give such a definition of the nature of the pains in purgatory as could obtain a common consent. The suffering condition of her members in that third state between earth and heaven has been left for delineation to the policy and imagination of the priesthood in different ages and places. Where the intellectual, æsthetic, and social culture have been high, these sufferings have been made to take on a more incorporeal nature, and so have assumed the mental, and spiritual, and emotional cast. But in the missionary fields of this church, and among her uneducated masses, the most physical, material, and gross views possible have been given and received. Her unity of faith in this respect is a figment. The definition has, of course, changed from age to age, with change of view, as in some other doctrines; but it has also shown an elasticity and adaptation to different communities in the same age. St. Thomas Aquinas, of the thirteenth century, makes the point very distinct: "Not only is there a fire, in which the souls are tormented, but it is the very same fire that torments the damned in hell and the just in purgatory." Yet Dr. Alexander, of the seventeenth century says it is

not determined "concerning the quality of those sensible pains which the souls held in purgatory undergo, whether it be true, corporeal fire, or whether darkness and sorrow, or any other torment and sorrow inflicted by the justice of God, punishing them after a wonderful and yet true manner." Yet Müller, writing for the papists of to-day in Massachusetts, says: "The souls in purgatory are poor souls, because they suffer the greatest pain of the senses, which is that of fire."* And he quotes with endorsement and to the same effect from Bede, of the eighth century: "Venerable Bede relates a strange thing which happened in his time. An Englishman, named Drithelmus, a good, honest man, died, and, by permission of God, rose again for the salvation of many. He said that immediately after his death his soul was conducted to purgatory by an angel. It seemed a great valley of deep extent, filled on one side with fire and flames, and on the other with snow and icebergs. 'And I saw,' continued he, 'a great number of souls horribly tormented, being tossed from the fires to the snows, from the snows to the fires, thus passing from the most extreme cold to the most excessive heat, without having a moment of rest. I was so terrified at this sight, that I believed it was hell, so dreadful were the torments. But the angel told me it was purgatory, where the souls of the just expiated their faults.'"[†] Hence in the devout exercise for

* *Charity for the Souls in Purgatory*, p. 34.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38.

the nine days preceding All Souls' Day for the Repose of Holy Souls in Purgatory, we find this form of prayer by St. Alphonsus: "Have pity on me, and have pity also on those blessed souls who burn in that fire. Mary, mother of God, succor them by thy powerful prayers."

Müller further says, that "the least degree of the pains of purgatory far surpasses the most excruciating torments of this world." And he confirms his statement by the following incident.

"In the life of Blessed Margaret Alacoque it is related that the soul of one of her departed sisters appeared to her, and said, 'There you are lying comfortably in your bed; but think of the bed on which I am lying, and suffering the most excruciating pains.' 'I saw this bed,' says the saint, 'and I still tremble in all my limbs at the mere thought of it. The upper and lower part of it was full of red-hot sharp iron points, penetrating into the flesh. She told me that she had to endure this pain for her carelessness in the observance of her rules.' 'My heart is lacerated,' she added, 'and this is the hardest of my pains. I suffer it for those fault-finding and murmuring thoughts which I entertained in my heart against my superiors. My tongue is eaten up by moths, and tormented on account of uncharitable words, and for having unnecessarily spoken in time of silence.'" Yet in another connection our author remarks that "the soul suffers more from the priva-

tion of the beatific vision of God, than from all the other torments of purgatory.”*

In The Month of November we find the following: “It is generally allowed that there exists in purgatory a real material fire, the properties of which have a marvellous intensity given to them by the divine the justice for the purpose of tormenting the souls of just after this life is over. . . . Compared with the pains of purgatory, all those wounds and dark prisons, all those wild beasts, all those heavy chains, all those woes and scourges, all those wheels and hatchets, all those hooks of iron, all those red-hot plates and caldrons of oil and boiling pitch, all those racks, swords, gratings, and crosses which the holy martyrs suffered with unconquered patience, are nothing.”†

The same author quotes Augustine thus: “St. Austin is of opinion that the pain suffered by a soul in purgatory only during the time required to open and shut one’s eye is more severe than what St. Lawrence suffered on the gridiron.”‡

“Could these poor souls leave the fire of purgatory for the most frightful earthly fire, they would, as it were, take it for a pleasure garden; they would find a fifty years’ stay in the hottest earthly fire more endurable than an hour’s stay in the fire of purgatory.”§

As to the nature of purgatorial pains, the Latin

* Charity for the Souls in Purgatory, pp. 217, 119, 138, 32.

† The Month of November, pp. 42, 43.

‡ Ibid., p. 51.

§ Charity for the Souls in Purgatory, p. 35.

and Greek Churches could not agree. The Romans believed that a material fire was one of the instruments, which the Greeks denied. The settlement of this point, and if possible the reconciliation of the Eastern and Western churches on it, was one of the four questions that led to the convocation of the Council of Florence, A. D. 1431.

After months of vain and vexatious discussion the views of the two churches were drawn out, but not harmonized. The Greek Church held that at death the souls of imperfect Christians are doomed to endure the hidings of God's face in a region of sorrow and gloom, where they may be aided by the mass, prayers, and alms of the church. To this the Latin Church would add that the perfect go to heaven at once on dying, while the penitent, who yet have not had time to do suitable penance, are consigned to the pains of purgatorial fire. The dividing question was on material fire as a means of punishment.

To this the papists then and since gave strict adhesion. And this theory of actual pain pervades their entire system. They do not hold that persons in purgatory commit sin there, or grow holier. They are ready for heaven except that they owe a debt for sin which can only be discharged by suffering. As Bellarmine illustrates it, they are as travellers who have come to the end of their journey, but it is after nightfall, and the gates of the city are shut. They must wait till morning, when they are sure of admittance. Hence he says: "You will object that they

may be in doubt whether they are in hell or purgatory. Not so. For in hell God is blasphemed, in purgatory he is praised. In hell there is neither habit of faith, nor hope, nor love of God ; in purgatory all of these."

The Catechism of the Council of Trent thus speaks of the nature of the pains in purgatory: "There is a purgatorial fire [ignis], tormented in which the souls of the pious make expiation for a certain period, that an entrance may be opened for them into that eternal country where nothing that defileth can enter."*

The duration of the detention in purgatory is as uncertain among papal authorities as the nature of the sufferings. Dr. Alexander says that it is not determined "concerning the duration of these purgatory pains, how long the souls are detained there. Soto thought that no soul continued in purgatory above ten years, yet it is a matter altogether uncertain how many years their pains shall last." Müller cites the case of a brother who procured thirty masses for the soul of his sister. At the offering of the last one for her it was revealed to him that but for those thirty masses she "would have suffered in purgatory to the end of the world."†

The whole region of purgatory is a land of torment. Massy mountains of fire are there, and on their sides these miserable ones wander about. They glide through valleys of flame, as fishes in their own

* On the Fifth Article of the Creed.

† Charity for the Souls in Purgatory, p. 24.

element. They are driven by avenging fiends into caves, whose roof, sides, and floor, are a flaming furnace. They are made to float wildly about in boiling lakes, and anon they are stiffening on icebergs. Through the same member, appetite or passion by which the guilty sufferer offended, is he now tormented. So the blasphemer or slanderer is hung up by the tongue to swing to and fro in the never weary wind. As one traveller after another is sent through these gloomy regions, and they have been sent as often as the church needed, they make pitiful details of the sorrows witnessed or experienced, and in glowing terms they set forth the relief experienced there by the offerings of the living.

CHAPTER VI.

VISITS FROM PURGATORY.

A COMMON method adopted by the priests to prove the existence of purgatory and to set forth the sufferings there endured, and so awaken the fears and sympathies of the living, was to pretend to certain intercommunications between the living and those in that dread place. The fiction of visits from it was a frequent and fruitful resort, as also visions, signs, apparitions, and dreams.

The theory of the return of the dead from purgatory to hold intercourse with the living is thus set forth in words under the approbation of Archbishop Hughes:

“The souls in purgatory cannot, ordinarily speaking, at their own will or of their own power, appear among us with an assumed body, or one of air. . . . Yet by a particular and extraordinary dispensation and permission of the Lord, the souls of the dead are able, and are wont, to hold intercourse with the living. Many apparitions, at various successive times, confirm our opinion, which is also that of St. Thomas, who asserts that, according to the dispensation of divine power they come from their abodes and present themselves to the sight of men, which is accorded to them,” subjoins the holy doctor, for

others' sake, "in order to their being instructed and terrified; and for their own sake, that they may ask for spiritual succors."*

Müller, however, says that "those cases, in which some of them were permitted to appear to their friends and ask assistance, are but the exceptions."†

The case of Drithelm, the Englishman, quoted elsewhere, as related by Bede, is illustrative and instructive on this theory of returning spirits. It seems that Drithelm was permitted to resume his life in the body, while his fearful memories of what he had seen in purgatory came nigh to taking it away again. He took up his abode in the monastery of Mailross, where the austerity of his life amazed every one. "Sometimes he was seen plunged up to the neck in icy water, praying with incredible fervor. When he was asked how he could bear such extreme cold, he replied, with heart-rending sighs, 'Ah! it is little compared to what I have seen.' When he macerated his body by unheard-of mortifications, his brethren said to him, 'Why do you treat yourself so barbarously? In God's name, spare yourself a little.' But he replied, 'Ah! I have seen far greater austerities. The most bitter pains of this life are but as roses, if compared to those of purgatory, to which I shall be subjected if I do not expiate my faults here below.' "‡

* The Month of November, p. 18.

† Müller's *Charity*, etc., p. 40.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

One would suppose that infancy and tender years might be exempt from the pains and horrors and loathsomeness of that intermediate region; yet Butler, in his *Lives*, relates this incident. Dinocrates, a lad of seven years, had died, whose reappearance his sister, St. Perpetua, thus describes: "I saw Dinocrates coming out of a dark place, where there were many others, exceedingly hot and thirsty; his face was dirty, his complexion pale, with the ulcer in his face of which he died, and it was for him that I prayed. There seemed a great distance between him and me, so that it was impossible for us to come to each other. Near him stood a vessel full of water, whose brim was higher than the stature of an infant. He attempted to drink; but though he had water, he could not reach it." She prayed for him with tears day and night, and afterward "saw the place, which had been dark before, now luminous; and Dinocrates, with his body very clean and well clad, refreshing himself, and instead of his wound a scar only."*

We recognize at once the paganism of the legend, and prefer the more beautiful original in the classical story of Tantalus.

Peter, abbot of Cluny, relates a thrilling and tragic incident. Blancus, abbot of St. Giles, had died, but returned one night, and meeting one of the monks of Cluny, implored the prayers and alms of the monastery, that he might be delivered from purgatory. The monk replied that probably no one

* Butler's *Lives of the Saints*. March 7.

would believe the story, to which the dead abbot responded, "In order, then, that no one may doubt, you may assure them that within eight days you will die."

The monk reported the next day, but was discredited; and was soon taken sick, and died within the prescribed days.*

A similar story is told of one of the cavalry of Charlemagne. When dying, he left his horse and equipments to a nephew, who was to sell the same and turn the proceeds into masses for the departed soul of his uncle. This he neglected to do, when his uncle reappeared to him from the land of spirits, upbraided him for his neglect, complained of his own terrible sufferings in consequence, and warned his nephew of a premature death, and peculiar sufferings in the middle state. The young man was soon taken off by a sudden death.†

Nor do these messengers from the spirit land return singly. St. Frances of the Blessed Sacrament was thronged by them. "By day and by night these souls used to come to her cell in crowds, asking her charitable prayers. . . . Sometimes they appeared to her all surrounded with fire; at other times in forms as black as coal, from which sparks of fire were issuing." While she was assisting in the choir, they would await her return near the holy-water font, and follow her to her cell. "She prayed for them almost unceasingly, had masses said, fasted on bread and

* Müller, pp. 69-71.

† Ibid., pp. 92, 93.

water almost throughout the whole year, took the discipline for hours, offered up her communions, pains, privations of sleep, her fears, labors, troubles, anxieties, and all her steps, not reserving for herself as much as one breath."*

A singular incident among the reappearances of the departed is said to have occurred in Paris in 1827. A poor servant-girl was accustomed to have mass said monthly for the souls in purgatory nearest to release and heaven. But she lost her health and place, and so became very poor. Barely able to walk, and with only one dollar, she went out in search of a new place for service. Going into a church to say her prayers, she was led to pay her last dollar for her accustomed monthly mass. Resuming her search, a tall, pale young man of noble demeanor met her with the remark, "My good girl, I think you are looking for a place." She assented. He directed her to a certain street and number, with the encouragement that she would find a good one. She met at the door the former domestic leaving in a pet. She informed the lady of the house by whom and how she had been directed to her house. The lady replied, "What you say is very strange. This morning I was not yet in need of a servant. I have only just now sent away an impudent servant that I had. Who could have sent you here?" The girl entered, and noticing a portrait on the wall, exclaimed, "That is the exact likeness of the young man who told me to come

* Müller, pp. 125-129.

here." The lady was greatly agitated, for that was the portrait of her son, who died two years before.

On inquiry the girl told of her devotions, sickness, poverty, her last dollar, and the morning mass, when the lady threw her arms around her neck, saying, "It is my son, my darling son, that has appeared to you; it is to you he owes his deliverance. You shall henceforward always remain with me, not as my servant, but as my daughter and my dear friend, and we shall always pray together for the poor suffering souls in purgatory."*

There are striking features about this incident: a servant-girl, devout, poor, sick, out of employment, yet still devout beyond her last penny; the soul she has rescued appearing, giving her a place at the house of his own mother, where she is treated as a daughter. Here is a rare combination of the spiritual, the heroic, the practical, and, for this kind of worship, the politic. And the story has this for its warrant: *Imprimatur: Joannes Josephus, Episcopus. Boston, 1872.*

Of these visits of returning spirits Bellarmine makes much use in proving and enforcing the notion of purgatory. The following are some that he adduces from the *Lives of the Saints*.

"St. Gregory the Great writes that the soul of Paschasius appeared to St. Germanus, and testified to him that he was freed from the pains of purgatory for his prayers." "Peter Damiani writes that St.

* Müller, pp. 104-109.

Severin appeared to a clergyman, and told him that he had been in purgatory for not having said the divine service at due hours, and that afterwards God had delivered him, and carried him to the company of the blessed." "St. Bernard writes that St. Malachy freed his sister from the pains of purgatory by his prayers, and that the same sister had appeared unto him, begging of him that relief and favor." "And St. Bernard himself, by his intercession, freed another who had suffered a whole year the pains of purgatory, as William, abbot, writes in his life." And the learned cardinal adds, "Many more might be cited, etc., but what we have quoted are the more authentic."

CHAPTER VII.

VISITS TO PURGATORY.

BUT it is not always enough to receive a visit from a resident of that spirit realm. To some minds unduly scientific, or philosophical, or variously inquisitive, or given to the cross-questioning of witnesses, some doubts might linger as to the reality, personality, identity, and square, human honesty of the ghostly visitor. The ghost of Crugal, a chief who fell in fight, is a beautiful conception by Ossian :

"Dim, and in tears, he stood and stretched his pale hand over the hero. Faintly he raised his feeble voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego: 'My spirit, Connal, is on my hills; my corse on the sands of Erin. Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, nor find his lone steps in the heath. I am light as the blast of Cromla. I move like the shadow of the mist! Connal, son of Colgar, I see a cloud of death; it hovers dark over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin must fall. Remove from the field of ghosts.' Like the darkened moon he retired, in the midst of the whistling blast. . . . The stars dim-twinkled through his form. His voice was like the sound of a distant stream. He is a messenger of death! He speaks of the dark and narrow house.'"

* Ossian's Fingal, Book II.

All this is beautiful, grand, thrilling. We see and feel it all, as Connal lies there in the still night, on the heath of Lena, apart from his army, with a mossy stone for his pillow, and the mountain-stream murmuring by. The figure of the ghost of Crugal is very distinct to our fancy, though dim and shadowy. "Dark is the wound of his breast," like the ulcer on the face of the boy Dinocrates, of which he died. Both are from the middle kingdom of souls, and very impressive in their testimony. Yet, as having passed from the mortal to the spirit land, we would not take their measurement of a load of wood, their affidavit to the signature of a note, or their testimony in a case of fifty dollars. When a witness moves to the stand like "the shadow of a mist," and when standing there "the stars dim-twinkle through his form," his testimony would ordinarily be received as thin. Moreover, such a witness could "retire like the darkened moon," before the opposing counsel had examined him, and ever after refuse to obey a subpœna.

Perhaps Romanism met some of these difficulties on the part of thoughtful and inquiring minds as pertaining to ghostly witnesses alone concerning purgatory. Very likely there was a demand, that could not be resisted, for genuine flesh and blood witnesses. Hence we have the travels and sketches of that under realm from those who had not seen death. Their itineraries of purgatory, published on return, describing its mountains, valleys, and caves, volcanic lakes and icebergs, torments, grades of sorrow, alternate pains

and joys, with the coming and going of the hosts of disembodied and yet corporate immortals, would make a small, fearful library. This unearthly spiritual literature has been well managed in its materials and editing and circulation. Müller's *Charity for the Souls in Purgatory*, so often quoted in this treatise, is a good illustration of the reproduction and modern issue of this kind of literature.

Sometimes the priest himself, or some well-known saint, would make the tour of those purgatorial regions, through the special favor of God, and return with detailed accounts. Sometimes one of the honored dead, widely known, would be found, after his death, to have made the visit in his lifetime, and so divulged the coveted information to his monastery, to be published after his real and final departure.

In this way the hierarchy were able to make this part of their spiritual machinery work with a terrible power. For by the aid of these messengers to these regions they could, as they had need, describe minutely the different apartments of the place, the different kinds, modes, and degrees of punishment, the condition and prospects of certain individuals known to the living and declared to be there, and the effects of the offerings and prayers of the church for them. So by this fiction of intercommunication the priests could make any use they pleased of the hopes and fears of their people; while their pretended knowledge of the pains and wants of friends detained there, and of the efficacy of alms and prayers for them, gave them an in-

conceivable power over the living, through the common and so strong principles of natural love and friendship.

For if money, penance, or prayers would alleviate or shorten the sufferings of any loved one in that place of painful purification, who would not grant either, and to any possible amount?

In time these feigned visits became historic material in the hands of the clergy, and so were a kind of funded historical and doctrinal treasure, from which they could draw as need required.

It being known that such intercommunication was possible, there followed visits direct to the place, and information more and more minute concerning it and its inmates and their sufferings was gradually spread abroad. An example found in Bellarmine, already partially quoted, should not be omitted: "One Drithelm, during a visit to the spiritual world, was led on his journey by an angel in shining raiment, and proceeded, in the company of his guide, towards the rising sun. The travellers at length arrived in a valley of vast dimensions. This region to the left was covered with roasting furnaces, and to the right with icy cold, hail and snow. The whole valley was filled with human souls, which a tempest seemed to toss in all directions. The unhappy spirits, unable in the one part to bear the violent heat, leaped into the shivering cold, which again drove them into the scorching flames which cannot be extinguished.

"A numberless multitude of deformed souls were in this manner whirled about and tormented without

intermission in the extremes of alternate heat and cold. This, according to the angelic conductor who piloted Drithelm, is the place of chastisement for such as defer confession and amendment till the hour of death.”*

The Vision of Charles the Bald, or, according to some, of Charles the Fat, is of the same general tenor. These Visions and Tours of Purgatory are of course but the wildest fancies of private authors. Yet we have reason to suppose that they are a fair reflection of the popular faith and feelings concerning this doctrine, and hence they find properly a place in the exposition of it.

This Charles wore crown in the last half of the ninth century. He was led by an angel through the spirit world, being guided and protected by a brilliant flaming thread that his conductor held. Thus progressing, he passed through deep valleys of fire, filled with pits of sulphur, lead, pitch, and oil. In these pits turbulent bishops were punished. Black fiends gathered about him to cast him in, but his guide and thread saved him.

“My conductor, who carried the ball, wound about my shoulder a doubled thread, drawing me to him with such force that we ascended high mountains of flame, from whence issued lakes and burning streams, melting all kinds of metals.

“There I found the souls of lords who had served

* This legend, with variations, is found in many old Romish authors. Its earliest appearance is probably in Bede, who died A. D. 735.

my father and my brothers, some plunged up to the hair of their heads, others to their chins, others with half their bodies immersed. . . . While I was timidly bending over their sufferings I heard at my back the clamor of voices: *Potentes potentior tormenta patiuntur*. . . . I looked up and beheld on the shores boiling streams and ardent furnaces, blazing with pitch and sulphur, full of great dragons, large scorpions, and serpents of a strange species; where also I saw some of my ancestors, princes, and my brothers also. . . . Leading me there securely, we descended into a great valley, which on one side was dark, except where lighted by ardent furnaces, while the amenity of the other was so splendid that I cannot describe it."

On this pleasant side he finally discovers two fountains, one scalding and one temperate. "The luminous thread rested on the one of the fervid waters, where I saw my father Lewis, covered to his thighs, and though laboring in the anguish of bodily pain, he spoke to me, 'My son Charles, fear nothing. I know that thy spirit shall return unto thy body, and God has permitted thee to come here that thou mayest witness the punishments I endure because of the sins I have committed. One day I am placed in the boiling bath of this large vessel, and on another changed into that of more temperate waters. This I owe to the prayers of St. Peter, St. Denis, and St. Remy, who are the patron saints of our royal house. But if by prayers and masses, offerings and alms, psalmody and vigils, my faithful bishops and abbots, and even all the eccle-

siastical order assist me, it will not be long before I am deliverd from these boiling waters. Look at your left.' I looked, and beheld two tuns of boiling waters. 'These are prepared for thee,' he said, 'if thou wilt not be thine own corrector, and do penance for thy crimes.' '*

In his Treatise on Purgatory Bellarmine introduces this personal narrative of St. Christina:

"Immediately after I departed from the body my soul was received by ministers of light and angels of God, and conducted to a dark and horrid place, filled with the souls of men. The torments which I there witnessed are so dreadful that to attempt to describe them would be utterly in vain. And there I beheld not a few who had been known to me while they were alive.

"Greatly concerned for their hapless state, I asked what place it was, thinking it was hell. But I was told that it was purgatory, where are kept those who in their life had repented indeed of their sins, but had not paid the punishment due for them. I was next taken to see the torments of hell, where also I recognized some of my former acquaintances upon earth.

"Afterwards I was translated into Paradise, even to the throne of the divine Majesty; and when I saw the Lord congratulating me, I was beyond measure rejoiced, concluding, of course, that I should hencefor-

* This Vision in varied forms may be found in D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, under "Dante's Inferno," as quoted from the ancient chronicles of St. Denis, and also in St. Patrick's *Purgatory*, p. 20, and in William of Malmesbury's *History* that ends with A. D. 1143.

ward dwell with him for evermore. But he presently said to me, 'In very deed, my sweetest daughter, here you shall be with me; but for the present I offer you your choice. Will you stay for ever with me now? or will you return to the earth, and there in your mortal body, but without any detriment to it, endure punishments by which you may deliver out of purgatory all those souls whom you so much pitied; and may also, by the sight of your penance and the example of your life, be a means of converting to me some who are yet alive in the body, and so come again to me at last with a great increase of your merits?'

"I accepted, without hesitation, the return to life, on the condition proposed; and the Lord, congratulating me on the promptitude of my obedience, ordered that my body should be restored to me.

"And here I had an opportunity of admiring the incredible celerity of the blessed spirits; for, in that very hour, having been placed before the throne of God at the first recital of the *Agnus Dei*, in the mass which was said for me, at the third my body was restored. This is an account of my death, and return to life."

The author of her life then narrates that "she walked into burning ovens, and though she was so tortured by the flames that her anguish extorted from her the most horrible cries, yet when she came out there was not a trace of any burning to be detected on her body. Again, during a hard frost she would go and place herself under the frozen surface of a river

for six days and more at a time. Sometimes she would be carried round by the wheel of a water-mill, with the water of the river, and having been whirled round in a horrible manner she was as whole in body as if nothing had happened to her; not a limb was hurt. At another time she would make all the dogs in the town fall upon her, and would run before them like a hunted beast. And yet, in spite of being torn by thorns and brambles, and worried and lacerated by the dogs to such a degree that no part of her body escaped without wounds, there was not a weal nor scar to be seen."

By these terrible sufferings, endured voluntarily, she redeemed out of purgatory the souls of those whom she so much loved. "And this not for a few days, but for forty-two years, during which she continued alive after her resurrection."*

The experience of Catharine of Raconisio is so peculiar, and throws so much light on the interior and more spiritual life of a devout Roman-catholic, that we must not omit a passage from it.

"Once when lying in bed tormented with a violent pain, she set herself to meditate on the greater flames of purgatory, when she was rapt in spirit so as to see them. Then the Lord, in order that she might be the more moved to compassion towards these souls, willed not only that she should gaze with her

* Book II. chap. 9. *De Gemitu Columbæ*. Translation from *Manual of Romish Controversy*. By the Rev. R. P. Blakeney, LL. D., pp. 159-160. T. Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh.

eyes upon their pains, but that she should have experimental proof of them. And so, while she stood absorbed in contemplation, a single spark of this fire darted out, and lighted upon her left cheek. So keen was the pain she felt from it, that her face soon swelled up, and the pain lasted several days, and was such that she confessed that, compared with this agony, the pains of this life were a mere nothing. From this time there arose in her a burning desire to extend suffrages to those souls with every kind of penance; and she offered herself to her Saviour, to suffer with all readiness every affliction of the soul or toil of the body, to liberate them from such cruel torments. And forthwith she not only commenced a most rigorous life, but was often taken with various pains of the greatest severity, and by this she earned a vision from time to time of many souls going forth from purgatory and flying to heaven by her means.' '*

These narratives of tours to and in and from purgatory, by which the papal doctrines are most powerfully taught, are sometimes exceedingly interesting, as showing the intelligence of the masses for whom they are published, and the power of adaptation on the part of their teachers. The following is a good illustration.

"It is related of a religious of St. Dominic that finding himself at the point of death, he earnestly begged a friend who was a priest to be pleased, as soon as he was dead, to offer the sacrifice of the mass

* Month of November, pp. 44, 45.

for a suffrage for his soul. He had scarce expired when the priest went to the church, and celebrated with devotion for the soul of his deceased friend. When the sacrifice was done, he had hardly taken off the sacred vestments when the deceased religious presented himself to him, and rebuked him severely for his hardness of heart in leaving him in the most cruel fire of purgatory for the long space of thirty years. 'How thirty years?' answered the good priest, all astonishment 'why, it is not yet an hour since you left this life, so that your corpse is, so to say, still warm.' To this the dead man replied, 'Learn hence, my friend, how tormenting is the fire of purgatory, when barely an hour seems to be thirty years; and learn to have pity, too, upon us.'*

Yet this little manual of private devotion, this Daily Food for the devout papist through the month of November, is a publication of this century! It was issued in New York in 1855, not in Old York in 1055, and is "approbated" by Archbishop Hughes!

Some of the causes that assign those ancient saints to such terrible sufferings are singular. "The venerable Ludovico Blosio, a great master of spiritual life, and of equal learning, relates that a devout servant of God, whom he was well acquainted with and loved, had it granted him to see a departed soul all surrounded with flames, and he gave him to understand that he was deprived of the beatific vision of God for having received the Saviour under the sacramental species

* Month of November, pp. 51, 52.

without being duly prepared; and that he lay immersed in burning flames for having come with culpable tepidity to the eucharistic table.”*

Were the following found in some black-letter quarto, or monastic and mediæval manuscript, we should not think it worth transcribing, or presume to hold any living man to its sentiment; but it has its place in a devotional book recently published, and under the “approbation” of an American archbishop. What can we think of a religious body in which such statements are published in all sincerity and received in all confidence?

One Catharine, a devout convert, “took especial delight in the devotion of the Rosary, reciting it devoutly more than once in the day, and applying it wholly, or in part, as a suffrage for the souls in purgatory. Now the Lord, to show how great relief to these souls such a devotion was, made known to the afore-said saint in writing that, while Catharine one day was reciting a third part of the Rosary for the dead, meditating the while on the mysteries of the passion, there gushed from the limbs of a most beautiful infant, who represented our Lord Jesus Christ, fifty-five fountains, just the number of the Aves and Pater-nosters which compose a third part of the Rosary; which sent forth in great abundance most clear waters, which all fell into purgatory, and refreshed the tormented souls so much that they seemed no longer to have any sense of pain. And at this, voices, all of joy, mounted up,

* Month of November, p. 78.

thanking and blessing Catharine, their pious benefactor. Oh, how much to be praised are those families who join every evening in reciting together the Rosary, as a suffrage for the souls in purgatory!"*

It is very gratifying to find, now and then, among these purgatorial incidents of devout authors some that take a very practical turn; and if they are believed by the living, they must tend to make better men. The following is a sample, given on the authority of Benedict XIII.:

"A brother who belonged to the order of preaching friars related that his father, a very powerful and wealthy lord, availed himself of the services of a certain farrier to shoe his horses, to whom, when he died, he was a debtor to a certain amount for his labor; and his work had been done several years before that time.

"When he was dead, he appeared to a certain faithful servant of his, and, holding in his hand a hammer and a farrier's tongs with some red-hot horse-shoes, 'Go,' said he, 'and beg my wife to be so good as to pay off the debt for which I am suffering here in purgatory.'

"The pious woman did so, satisfying not only the demands of the aforesaid farrier, but those of all her husband's other creditors."†

This is certainly a novel way of settling accounts; and if communication with that middle state were free and open, doubtless many truthful and profitable mes-

* Month of November, pp. 81, 82.

† Ibid., pp. 115, 116.

sages could be forwarded to the heirs of some Protestant estates left deeply in debt and said to be insolvent.

Herein is a grim hint at justice. If all the unpaid bills due to honest and hard-working mechanics are thus worked out in the lower world by deceased debtors, purgatory must be a busy and a noisy place. Not a few, who passed through this life easily and on credit, will find themselves for the first time at work and earning their own living. This feature of the papal purgatory, it must be confessed, has a look quite utilitarian for a Protestant.

It is interesting to study the workings of this papal system of purgatorial suffering, and note the causes that expose and condemn to it. Sometimes the cause is ritual, canonical, and apparently quite trivial; but in other instances it lies in the injury of the vital structure of good society, or in the infringement of the fundamental principles of good morals. We make a condensed statement of several cases, gathered miscellaneously from the authors already quoted.

One has yet ten years more to serve in his iron and burning armor for having injured the reputation of another; another, for having recited the canonical hours hurriedly; another, for having kept some money without permission; another, for obstinacy in refusing to submit to the will of others; another, for too great familiarity with merely worldly men; another, for neglect of penance.

When such pretended knowledge of the spirit land

is faithfully spread abroad through a community and among a people who believe it most profoundly, the fiction exercises a power inconceivable. For when one believes that his precious dead are broiling, roasting, buffeting the surges of a lake of fire, or freezing in more than polar cold, and all because his alms and prayers are withheld, what will he not do? In a homily preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, written probably in the eleventh century, are found these words: "Some are there long, some a little while, according to what their friends do for them here in life."*

These old words give us an insight into the nature and utility of the doctrine. It is thus made an engine of terrible power. If monarch or peasant be refractory, if the wealthy be too close in his contributions, if the negligent sinner omit any rite profitable or courteous to the church, if the dying remember not with sufficient liberality the church and chair of St. Peter, the fires of purgatory are flashed in his face. If a deceased one leave wealthy relatives, it is soon known that the departed is in need of many and expensive masses for the repose of his soul.

Dr. England well states the practical utility of this intercommunication with the middle land: "They who are in this state of purgation are still members of the church, and may, therefore, be aided by our prayers

* *St. Patrick's Purgatory: an Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Heaven, current during the Middle Ages.* By Thomas Wright, Esq., M. A., F. S. A., etc. London, 1844. P. 25.

and sacrifices; and hence from the days of the apostles commemoration was made for them in the mass."*

In a family known to the writer five hundred dollars were thus expended in masses for the soul of the husband and father. When O'Connell died, collections were taken extensively in the churches that his soul might be hastened and eased through purgatory. When Bishop Fenwick of Baltimore, and De Neker of New Orleans, had been long dead, and it could be hoped at rest, as good bishops are expected to be when they die, high mass was celebrated, and at great expense, for the repose of their souls.

Says Rockwell, in his "Foreign Travels and Life at Sea," "In that part of Spain where I have spent the last month (near Madrid and in it), the common price of a mass is twenty-five cents; but the people are taught that the more they pay above this sum, the more influence the mass will have in delivering souls from the pains of purgatory." "When last in Naples I purchased a large supply of Catholic tracts, many of which are in poetry, and have awful pictures of the day of judgment, purgatory, and other matters, with horrid-looking devils thrusting pitchforks through the poor wretches who have fallen into their power. One of the most curious tracts I have met with, however, is a letter from souls in purgatory to those living on earth, asking for alms to be given to the priests to hire them to chant masses for the benefit of the poor suffer-

* Garden of the Soul, Explanation of the Mass, p. 64.

ers in those lower regions.”* And it is not long since that Sir Culling Eardly Smith stated at a public meeting in London, that an Indian Begum, mother of Col. Dyce Sombre, had paid several thousand pounds for a single mass for the repose of her soul when she should leave the body.

A volume of these visits from and to purgatory, and of these visions, might be gathered; but we have introduced enough for the purpose in hand. As mirrors of the common belief of the times in which they originated, they give a fair idea of the religious sentiments then held. Yet, where such representations are believed, we can form but faint conceptions of the priestly power. If one believes in the reality of these sufferings, and that his father confessor has power to abate them, the circle of his personal liberty is narrow. Yet for substance they were believed. Says Bellarmine, “*Poenas Purgatorii esse atrocissimas, et cum illis nullas poenas hujus vitæ comparandas, docent constanter patres.*”†

* *Foreign Travels and Life at Sea*, vol. V., pp. 305, 310, 311.

† “The fathers strongly affirm that the pains of purgatory are exceedingly severe, and cannot come in comparison with any of the sufferings of this life.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THEORY OF INDULGENCES.

WE come now to consider the radical, pivotal force of the papal system. In her Theory of Indulgences are the hidings of power in the Roman-catholic Church.

According to the Papacy every sin has a certain amount of penalty attached to it, as by weight or measure. We can, if we will, bear and exhaust that penalty in this life by penance. But if we neglect penance, or for any reason die before we have met the full penalty due our sins, we must endure the balance in purgatory. This is said of true Christians, and not of unregenerate persons. And repentance does not stay this definite penalty. It must be visited on the sinner here or in purgatory, whether he has repented and is forgiven and justified of God or not. But some very good men, as prophets, apostles, martyrs, and eminent saints, not only meet the full debt of penalty that they owe, but they do and suffer more than is demanded of them in justice. When they die there is a surplus of good works, or merit, standing to their account. They do not need it. They go at once to heaven. This surplus of merit constitutes a kind of church fund of merit. It is united with the merits of Christ, and is held in trust by the church to be dis-

pensed at her option to those who have died debtors to justice and unvisited penalty, and so are in purgatory. Or one while in life may do more good works than God demands, and the value of these will be put to his credit. He may voluntarily suffer beyond any personal demerits, and the value of all such pains will also be put to his credit, all which will stand in his name and favor, like a surplus in a bank account, and he may check it out in orders in favor of whom he will. This fund of merit, made up by the dead and the living, Müller calls "the treasures of the church,"* and the Council of Trent "the heavenly treasures of the church."† A draft on this fund, and the application of it for the relief of any soul in purgatory, is an Indulgence.

If, for example, the penalty yet to be endured be ten years in purgatory, the priest, for a consideration, grants the application of so much merit from this fund as is equivalent to those ten years of purgatorial sorrow. Sometimes the indulgence is plenary, that is, it covers all and every demand on the individual for punishment. If that person be in purgatory, the result of this plenary indulgence is his immediate release, and departure for heaven. Or, as Tetzels is said to have expressed it, "The very moment the money jingles in the chest, the soul for whom it is paid escapes from the pains of purgatory and flies to heaven."

The dispensation of this fund is also accommodated to the living. One knowing his crimes ascertains the

* *Charity for the Souls in Purgatory*, p. 143.

† Sess. XXI., ch. 9.

purgatorial penalty due, and buys himself off in advance of death, and so opens his way clear and direct to heaven. Not only so, but so accommodating and gracious a management is made of the fund, that one, for a price, can buy himself off from punishment for any particular sin that he may yet commit, or intends to commit, or even from the sins of all his future life.*

"God has left in his church the power of granting indulgences, and indulgences are extremely advantageous to the Christian people."†

"Indulgences in themselves contain all the treasures of the merits of Jesus Christ, the most blessed Virgin, and the Saints, so that they are distributed only by the authority of the Pope and of the bishops, for the sole end of giving to divine justice the satisfaction due in punishment for our sins."‡

That this is the theory of Indulgences, as held by the Roman-catholic Church, a few citations of authority will make evident. They hold that a definite amount of suffering, as a penalty, is due, and must be

* This application of an indulgence to future sins, either intended or unforeseen, is denied by many good papal authorities. Yet its practice cannot be denied, as we shall show. We present both sides historically, the practice and the denial, and leave the church, that claims immutability and infallibility in the fundamentals of doctrine and of usage, to adjust the discrepancies.

† Keenan's Doctrinal Catechism, p. 153. Approved by the Most Rev. John Hughes, D. D., Archbishop of New York. Dunigan & Brother, New York, 1855.

‡ Purgatory Opened to the Piety of the Faithful, or The Month of November Consecrated to the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory. With the approbation of the Most Rev. John Hughes, Archbishop of New York. P. 97. Dunigan & Brother, New York, 1855.

endured or met, for every sin, and that the forgiveness and justification of God do not dispense with this penalty. So the Council of Trent:

“If any one shall say, that after the grace of justification received, unto every penitent sinner the guilt is so remitted, and the penalty of eternal punishment so blotted out, that there remains not any penalty of temporal punishment to be discharged, either in this world, or in the next in purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be laid open, let him be anathema.”*

To the same import is the exposition of the Ursuline Manual. An indulgence “is a releasing of the temporal punishments which remain due to sin already pardoned. These temporal punishments God inflicts on sinners whose crimes he has forgiven, in the same manner as a good parent punishes a child to give him a horror of his fault, and prevent him again relapsing into the same. This punishment, which remains due to sinners whose crimes have been forgiven, is suffered either in this world by sickness, pains of mind or body, loss of goods, or voluntary penances, or else in the next world by the fire of purgatory, and it is from the necessity of that atonement that an indulgence dispenses.”†

In The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, this

* Buckley's Trans., Sess. 6, ch. 16, Canon 30.

† “The Ursuline Manual, or a Collection of prayers, etc., for forming youth to the practice of solid piety; arranged for the Young Ladies educated at the Ursuline Convent, Cork.” P. 165.

article on indulgences stands thus: "I affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people."*

And that the Church of Rome in her theory of indulgences holds to a fund of merit, as above stated, is evident from all her defenders who speak on this topic. Says Leo XII. in his Jubilee Bull of 1824, "We have resolved, by virtue of the authority given to us from heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, and of his virgin mother, and of all the saints, which the Author of human salvation has entrusted to our dispensation."

Or take certain inscriptions found in the churches of Rome, which are but posted advertisements of what can be obtained and done in those churches. On a marble slab in the chapel in St. Mary Major is the following: . . . "We grant and indulge in perpetuity that whensoever any priest, secular, or of any regular order, shall at the aforesaid altar celebrate a mass for the dead, for the soul of any one of the faithful, which, joined to God in charity, shall have passed from this life, the same soul shall obtain indulgence by means of suffrage from the treasure of the church; so that obtaining the suffrages of the merits of the same our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the

* The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, contained in the Profession of Faith published by Pope Pius IX., p. 69. Dunigan & Brother. New York, 1855.

saints, it may be freed from the pains of purgatory, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. Given at Rome, at St. Mary Major, under the seal of the fisherman, 19th of August, 1613, ninth year of our Pontificate." This perpetual grant was made by Paul V.*

In the Church of St. Sebastian, and at the entrance to "the Catacombs" in it, is the following: "In this most sacred place which is called, 'At the Catacombs,' where were buried the bodies of 174,000 holy martyrs and of 46 High Pontiffs, likewise martyrs," etc. Then on the opposite side of the church, cut in marble is this: "Whosoever, contrite and confessed, shall have entered it [the Catacombs] shall obtain plenary remission of all his sins, through the merits of the 174,000 Holy Martyrs," etc. †

Moreover drafts may be made on this fund of merit for particular persons. "The mass and prayers and the other good works, although in some measure they are common to all, nevertheless they profit much more those for whom they are made in particular than the others." ‡

In the Church of St. Lawrence at Rome, there is on a marble slab a grant in perpetuity that whenever a mass is there celebrated "for the liberation of one soul existing in purgatory, the same soul shall, from the treasure of the church, the merits of the same of our

* Romanism as it exists at Rome. By the Hon, J. W. Percy. London, 1847. Pp. 12, 13.

† Ibid., pp. 27, 28.

‡ Christian Doctrine. A Manual of Faith in common use at Rome. See Percy, *ut supra*, pp. 9, 14, 15.

Lord Jesus Christ and all his saints, obtain the same indulgences and remissions of sins by the acceptance of divine clemency, and the said mass shall operate for the liberation of the same for which it shall be celebrated," etc.*

This perpetual grant for that church was made by Gregory XIII. And thus high mass was celebrated for O'Connell and Bishops Fenwick and De Neker in particular.

The indulgences thus obtained may be plenary or limited, according to contract, price and circumstances. A common inscription on the entrances to many of the churches at Rome is, "*Indulgentia plenaria, perpetua et quotidiana, pro vivis et defunctis.*" "A partial indulgence," says the Ursuline Manual, "such as of ten years, or a hundred days, or forty days, dispenses from as much of the temporal punishment due to sin as would be remitted by ten years, a hundred days, or forty days of the canonical penances formerly imposed on sinners."† And so we find on these marble slabs and in papal books of faith and of devotion definite remissions, thus: Nicolas IV. granted to those who should visit the Church of St. John Lateran, indulgence for "three years and three quarantines" to those living in the vicinage, "five years and five quarantines" to Tuscans, Apulians and Lombards, and "seven years and seven quaran-

* Percy, 1, 2.

† Ursuline Manual, p. 166.

times" to those beyond the Alps and the sea.* In 1836 Gregory XVI. granted an "Indulgence of 200 days" to any one who would visit the image of the Blessed Virgin in the Church of St. Maria Sopra Minerva. In another part of the church is this inscription in marble: "The first Friday after Easter is the Station with Indulgence of 14,000 years." As you leave St. Paul's you read thus: "Kissing devoutly the most Holy Cross in any place gains one year and 40 days of Indulgence by concession of the Chief Pontiffs, John XXII. and Clement VI." In the Church of St. Dominic at Naples there hangs a long list "of the Indulgences of the most Holy Rosary," which concludes thus three chapters: "By the series of the above mentioned Indulgences, it is to be observed, that every brother, by the sole recital of the Rosary can gain even hundreds of thousands of Indulgences every day, besides the Plenary Indulgence several times in the year."†

Sometimes the length of the indulgence is uncertain from its very conditions. For example, in the "Hours of the Blessed Virgin," as quoted by Stopford, we find the following: "Pope John XXII. granted to all that say this following prayer as they pass through any churchyard or place of burial so many years of pardon as there are bodies buried in it. 'God save all faithful souls whose bodies rest here, and everywhere in the dust.' " etc.‡

* Percy, p. 34.

† Ibid., pp. 45, 46, 48, 68.

‡ Pagano-Papismus: or, An Exact Parallel between Rome-Pagan and Purgatory.

At the entrance of the Church of St. Saviour de Thernis, cut in marble, is the following notice :

“St. Gregory, Pope, and doctor of the church, consecrated this church in the honor of the holy Saviour, and conceded to all, truly penitent and confessed, visiting it on each day, seven years and the same number of quarantines; on each day, however, of Lent plenary indulgence. Afterwards Sylvester, Gregory and Nicolas, Roman Pontiffs, also conceded to strangers devoutly visiting this church plenary indulgence; and lastly, as well the aforesaid as other Roman Pontiffs conceded to those visiting it at the time of Lent two thousand two hundred and sixty years; but on each day of the whole year eleven hundred and thirty years of indulgence.”

Near the door of this church, on the street, and in marble, is this advertisement also: “Indulgences conceded in perpetuity by high Pontiffs, in this church. Every day of the year there are twelve hundred and thirty years of indulgence; for all Lent there is plenary indulgence: for the pilgrims there is every day plenary indulgence.”*

In the Chapel of St. Helen, and on parchment, this was suspended while Percy was in Rome in the years 1843, 1844 and 1846.

“On the Second Sunday of Advent there is the

Rome-Christian in their Doctrines and Ceremonies. By Joshua Stopford, B. D., Rector of All Saints, in the City of York, 1675, p. 116. London, J. Hatchard & Son, 1844.

* Percy, pp. 48, 49.

station, and eleven thousand years of indulgence, and the remission of all sins.”*

So in another thus: “Gregory I. granted to all and each one visiting this Church of Sts. Cosmo and Damian one thousand years of indulgence, and on the day of the station of the same church, the same Gregory granted ten thousand years of indulgence.”†

In the Church of St. Dominic, at Naples, Percy made copies of these among other inscriptions:

“Whoever recites the third part of the Rosary gains forty days’ indulgence. More, other five years, and as many quarantines. More, sixty thousand years, and as many quarantines of penances enjoined.”

“Whoever carries about him the Holy Rosary, one hundred years, and as many quarantines of indulgences of the penances enjoined.”‡

These marble and parchment advertisements of indulgences, copied off by Mr. Percy, carry up the time for which one may buy off himself or a friend in purgatory from canonical punishments, into scores of thousands of years. He says he might have much increased the collection, “but it would be useless to fatigue the reader with any more.”§

The Rev. Henry Alford, D. D., Dean of Canterbury, visiting Rome some time after Mr. Percy was there, says:

“One’s mind is perfectly confounded with the vastness of the numbers of years which may be gained

* Percy, p. 50.

‡ Ibid., p. 67.

† Ibid., p. 51.

§ Ibid., 53, 54.

by any worshipper on solemn occasions; indeed, on every day of his life. By visiting the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme on the Second Sunday in Advent may be gained 'eleven thousand years of indulgence and the remission of all one's sins.' By visiting the Church of Saints Cosmo and Damian, in the Forum, any day, one thousand years, and on the station at the same church ten thousand years. By kissing the foot of the idol in St. Agostino once in every day, one hundred days' indulgence may be gained. So that if a devout Roman chose to pass in his walk, every day for a year, these last two churches, he might gain at St. Agostino thirty-six thousand five hundred, and at Saints Cosmo and Damian, three hundred and sixty-five thousand years' remission of purgatory; in all four hundred and one thousand five hundred years for every year of his life, by these two churches only."

It was not straining a papal truth, therefore, when Pope Innocent said, "So many and so numerous are the indulgences of the Lateran Church, that they cannot in any wise be numbered but by God alone, all of which I myself confirm."

Much business tact is shown in securing visits to these churches, and no little shrewdness in advertising the spiritual wares offered within; as over the door of the chapel *Domine quo Vadis* this little poster was hung:

"Stop, O traveller, and enter into this holy temple, for you will find there the footprint and image of our Lord Jesus Christ when he met with St. Peter,

who was flying from prison. Alms are requested for wax and oil for the liberation of some soul from purgatory." This advertising leaflet was withdrawn in 1845.*

The thing is better done thus in the Chapel of St. Mary of the Ladder:

"In this temple, while St. Bernard was celebrating the Sacrifice of the Mass, he beheld the ladder where descending and ascending angels bore souls to heaven. From hence it happened that that holy place, before dedicated to the Virgin Mother of God, was called St. Mary of the Ladder, and Roman Pontiffs granted indulgences; so that, by the oblation of the divine Sacrifice, souls might be redeemed from the pains of purgatory."†

When it is the purpose of the devout one visiting any church to offer prayer for an indulgence for himself or for some one, known or unknown, in purgatory, a prescribed form of prayer is necessary. These forms of prayer may be purchased at the book-stores, though they are found framed and hanging in the most of the churches. They are in different languages and of great variety, and are addressed to the Saviour, to the Virgin, or to the Saints, to suit the varied necessities and fancies of the worshippers.

There is other tact, as well as in advertising, in disposing of these indulgences. They have at Rome a fac simile imprint of the sole of the shoe of the Virgin. On this is printed, among other matter, this:

* Percy, p. 57.

† Ibid., p. 29.

“The Pontiff John XXII. conceded three hundred years’ indulgence to whomsoever shall three times kiss this measure, and at the same time recite three Ave Marias; the which also was confirmed by Pope Clement VIII., the year of our redemption 1603. . . . This indulgence may be applied to the souls in purgatory. And it is permitted, to the greater glory of the Queen of Heaven, to take from this measure other similar measures, the which shall have the same indulgence.”

The German *fac simile*, however, lying before the writer, is much more narrow and delicate under the instep than the Italian, on which John’s and Clement’s endorsement grants seven hundred years’ indulgence, rather than the three hundred as on the broader Italian copy. The German is preferable by four hundred years out of purgatory for the same number of kisses and Aves.

To all this evidence that the living, by their prayers and sufferings and masses, may benefit the dead and shorten their delay and pains in purgatory, this caveat is carefully filled in by the mother church. If one is careless about penance, neglects the confessional, and fails to obtain absolution before death, he cannot be at once aided in purgatory by any works of the living. If not in earnest for a holy life, careless of little sins, uncharitable to neighbors, negligent of the communion, with no sorrow for the crimes of youth, and converted on the death-bed—“ah! how much combustible matter, how many imperfections, venial sins, and temporal punishments due to mortal and venial sins,

do you think they took with them to be cancelled in the flames of purgatory? . . . In the life and revelations of St. Gertrude we read that those who have committed many grievous sins, and who die without having done due penance, are not assisted by the ordinary suffrages of the church until they are partly purified by divine justice in purgatory.”*

While this celestial treasure of the church, this spiritual bank of merit, has deposits almost infinite for the benefit of suffering souls, and while it can be checked out on call at the option of the priest, it is under special and stringent guards and limitations. Eminently proper and sacredly right it is that such a brokerage in the policies, stocks, insurances, and collaterals of the world to come should be hedged about to the extreme limits of human caution and invention. If malfeasance, breaches of trust, perversion of funds, and financial “irregularities” are irrepressible and almost inevitable in matters of dollars and cents, how much greater the temptations and liabilities at a spiritual banking-house, where the receiving and paying tellers have the momentous handling for their customers of sins and salvation and perdition !

There is a society, entitled The Arch-Confraternity for the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory. According to the Brief of Pius IX., dated March 27, 1862, the members of this society may gain the indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines for each visit to a graveyard, praying there for the repose of the departed,

* Müller, pp. 23, 24.

and a plenary indulgence, on the usual conditions, for four such visits made within a month.*

Some years since a society was formed in Dublin to assist the sick and dying, and prepare them by the last sacraments for death, and then to pray for their souls after death.

The mutual advantages of this organization, under the patronage of St. John the Evangelist, are suggested by the ninth rule: "Every superior shall, on his death, be entitled to three masses, every rector to two, and ever subscriber to one, provided he shall have died a natural death, being a subscriber for six months, and been clear of all dues at the time of his death. Subscriptions received in the chapel on every Wednesday evening."†

Enough has been indicated and set forth in the above quotations to show the faith and practice of the papal Church on the doctrine of Indulgences. It may be well to show their views and usages concerning future and intended sins, though these are often included in a Plenary Indulgence.

The theory and practice of Tetzl will illustrate this point. He assumed to sell indulgences for unknown future sins, be they more or less, and for definite and intended crimes. In one of his public addresses, before offering his indulgences, he said, "Come, and I will give you letters, all properly

* Müller, pp. 154, 155.

† Blakeney's Manual of Romish Controversy, p. 215. T. Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh.

sealed, by which even the sins that you intend to commit may be pardoned.”* One of his letters of indulgence runs thus: . . . “I, in virtue of the apostolic power that has been confided to me, absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments, and penalties which thou mayest have incurred; moreover, from all excesses, sins, and crimes that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be. . . . I remit the penalties thou shouldest have endured in purgatory. . . . In the hour of death, the gate by which sinners enter the place of torments and punishment shall be closed against thee, and, on the contrary, the gate leading to the paradise of joy shall be open. And if thou shouldst not die for long years, this grace shall remain unalterable until thy last hour shall arrive.”†

And this indulgence, covering all future sins, was tested and sustained, on a particular case, in the court at Hagenau in 1517. A lady who had purchased a full indulgence till death, died soon after. The husband, procuring no mass for the repose of her soul, was brought by the priest before the magistrate for contempt of religion. The following conversation ensued:

“‘Is your wife dead?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘What have you done for her?’ ‘I have buried her body and commended her soul to God.’ ‘But have you had a mass said for the repose of her soul?’ ‘I have not; it was of no use; she entered heaven at the moment of her death.’ ‘How do you know that?’ ‘Here is the

* D'Aubigné's Reformation, Book 3, chap. 1.

† Ibid.

proof,' and gave the indulgence to the magistrate. In it he read that at the moment of death the woman who had received it would at once enter heaven without going to purgatory. The husband then said, 'If the reverend gentleman maintains that a mass is still necessary, my wife has been deceived by our most holy father the Pope; if she has not been, it is the priest who deceives me.' There could be no reply, and the husband was acquitted."*

A Saxon nobleman gave a more practical and personal test of Tetzel's theory of indulgence for intended sins. He asked Tetzel if he could pardon a slight revenge that he wished to take on an enemy. The monk assented, and the price was fixed at thirty crowns, and paid. When Tetzel left Leipsic and was in a wood between Jüterbock and Treblin, the nobleman waylaid and robbed him of his indulgence money. It was for this very act that he bought the indulgence. Tetzel carried the case into the courts, but the nobleman was acquitted.† Nor is there any evidence that Tetzel went beyond the instructions of Leo in thus granting pardon for future as well as for past sins. It was the common theory of the church.

It will be understood, from what has been said, that these indulgences could be obtained only by purchase, or in some manner rendering an equivalent. So alone could the Church of Rome realize the utility and ultimate design of the system. It was a system for relieving at times, and for replenishing at any time,

* D'Aubigné's Reformation, Book 3, chap. 2.

† Ibid.

the papal treasury. Those visits to churches, altars, and sacred places, and those masses and prayers for the dead, do not become of value and force except as some official of the church takes part in them. For this he has his fee or unavoidable gratuity. Indulgences and pardons have their prices graded to the sins, rank, and pecuniary ability of him asking for them. Thus in their sale by Tetzels, "kings, queens, princes, archbishops, bishops, were, according to the scale, to pay twenty-five ducats for an ordinary indulgence. Abbots, counts, and barons, ten. The other nobles, the rectors, and all those who possessed an income of five hundred florins, paid six. Those who had two hundred florins a year, paid one, and others only a half." So run the papal instructions to this broker of pardons. "For particular sins, Tetzels had a particular tax. For polygamy it was six ducats; for sacrilege and perjury, nine ducats; for murder, eight ducats; for witchcraft, two ducats. Samson, who exercised the same trade in Switzerland as Tetzels in Germany, had a somewhat different scale. For infanticide he required four *livres tournois*, and for parricide and fratricide, one ducat."*

But much earlier than the days of Tetzels a volume of sins, with prices carried out, was prepared and published by the papal Church. The book is entitled, "*Taxa Cancellariæ Apostolicæ*." This arrangement of sins by catalogue, and marking their respective cost by a tariff of prices, is thus characterized by Claude

* D'Aubigné's Reformation, Book 3, chap. 1.

d'Espence, a candid Papist, and rector of the Sorbonne: "A book wherein thou mayest learn more wickedness than was ever yet discovered in all the summists and summaries of vices that are extant in all the world. A shameful book, a very index pointing men the way to the most foul and hateful sins."

After 1569 the Romish Church denied the genuineness of this work, though during the one hundred years preceding twenty-seven editions of it had been published, the first fifteen at Rome.*

A few items will show the quality of the work and the cost of crime about the times of the Reformation. Murder by a bishop or abbot cost one hundred grossos, a grosso being from two to four pence. If a layman kill a layman, the absolution cost six grossos; and the same if a woman destroy her unborn child. For killing father, mother, brother, or wife, one ducat and five carlins; for a priest to keep a concubine, seven grossos, for a layman, eight; fornication for a man, six grossos, for a nun, nine ducats and thirty grossos; for defiling mother, sister, kinswoman, or godmother, five grossos; and for perjury, six grossos.†

Like any article of commerce, indulgences have been put on the market of the world. In the year 1709 an English privateer from Bristol captured a Spanish vessel on her way to America, and there were found on board upwards of three millions of indulgen-

* The Literary Policy of the Church of Rome. By the Rev. Joseph Mendham, M. A. London: James Duncan. 1830. Pp. 75, 76.

† Stopford's *Pagano-Papismus*, pp. 360, 361.

ces, outward bound for a market. They varied in price from twenty pence for the poor, to eleven pounds for the rich. In 1800 another Spanish ship was captured by Admiral Harvey off the coast of South America, having among her invoiced merchandise bales of this ecclesiastical paper, bearing the seals of the courts of Spain and of Rome, valued at £7,500. Here were indulgences for various sins, and for eating flesh on fast days, with prices from fifty cents each to seven dollars. Some Dutch merchants at Tortola bought the lot for £200, hoping to put them on the Spaniards in South America at vast profits.

The proclamation of Jubilee Years, as they have been termed, has made this system of indulgences very specially profitable to the chair of St. Peter. Boniface VIII. proclaimed the first by a bull of February 22, 1300. By this bull he granted a full absolution of all sins to such as should visit St. Peter's and St. Paul's at Rome between Christmas 1300 and 1301. And this Jubilee he ordained to be repeated at the close of each succeeding century. Pilgrims, to gain this indulgence, must visit these two churches daily for fifteen days in succession. The number that flocked to Rome on this call is perfectly incredible. The entire city through the whole year was as one crowd, the average being two hundred thousand strangers constantly. The offerings at the tombs of the two apostles were immense. Those in brass, and so of the poor alone, amounted to fifty thousand florins of gold. The gold florin being about seven shillings sterling,

and the value of money being then six times greater than now, this income from the poor alone must have been equal to about half a million of dollars. Then the offerings made by the wealthy, and in silver and gold, must have been immense indeed.*

Clement VI. and the Romans, seeing the advantage that accrued from the first Jubilee, were anxious to shorten the time for the second. It was therefore proclaimed for 1350. The crowd of strangers anxious for a full absolution varied through the year from eight to twelve hundred thousand. The receipts in offerings and for masses, prayers, and other priestly service, must have been vastly great. Again the time was shortened to thirty-three years, and multitudes gathered at Rome in 1390. To royal persons who did not attend the Pope granted the same absolution as if they had attended, but charged for it what would have been the cost of their journey to Rome. Not only so, but after the Jubilee was past the Pope sent his indulgence brokers into all parts of his dominions, to sell pardons to all who had been necessarily prevented from going to Rome. The receipts for this were great.†

The year 1400 being the time for the Centennial Jubilee, according to the original plan of Boniface VIII., the people flocked to Rome in multitudes to gain the promised indulgences. Some idea may be formed of their number and of the amount of treasure

* Bowers' History of the Popes, Cox's ed., vol. 3, pp. 47, 48.

† Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 143, 144.

they carried, from the fact that the king of France forbade his own subjects attending, giving as a reason, that should they go as freely as they wished, his kingdom would become depopulated, and the whole wealth of the nation would be transferred to Rome. His enemies might also then come on him and find him without men or money.*

Such facts as these will indicate what wide sweeps for treasure the popes were able to make through this power of granting indulgences. It is not strange, therefore, that Leo X., wishing to immortalize himself by building St. Peter's, scarcely then conceived, sent out Tetzel and a host of others to raise the funds by selling indulgences. And the policy succeeded well. For of the sixty or eighty millions of dollars which that basilica has cost, the most of the funds came by this means. And so the sale of indulgences procured for the world two noble gifts, St. Peter's and the Reformation.

It is due, however, to say that the papal Church, in the general Councils of Lateran, Lyons, Vienne, and Trent, tried to prevent these abusive sales of indulgences. The Council of Trent has these words:

"Whereas many remedies, applied heretofore by divers councils against the wicked abuses of questors of alms, have in later times become useless, yea, rather the depravity of such, to the great scandal and complaint of all the faithful, found daily so much the more to increase, as that there seems no longer to be any

* Bowers' History of the Popes, Cox's ed., vol. 3, p. 150.

hope left of their amendment," the Synod ordains that the sale of indulgences be canonically stopped.*

These "abuses" of sales by Tetzels and others had recently shamed and shocked the Christian world into the Reformation, and hence the diplomatic veto of the traffic by this august council in July, 1562. Yet the sales went on, as we have noticed above, and they continue to this day, as witness the advertisements of them so common in the churches at Rome: *Indulgentia plenaria et perpetua et quotidiana, pro vivis et defunctis.*†

And why not? While there is this vast heavenly treasure of the church on deposit, without spiritual interest, and subject to call, and may be applied for the relief of those suffering terribly in the middle state, it would seem to be most Christian and humane to encourage its distribution among the needy. May a government have its crowded granaries, and the starving and dying in its streets and hospitals, and yet refuse to sell supplies for the relief of these suffering ones?

It would be a wrong to the latest type of Romanism not to quote here so eminent authority as Cardinal Wiseman on Indulgences. It is gratifying to feel that his clear and comprehensive statements leave nothing wanting to our full understanding of this dogma. If the wide sweeping practice of this doctrine runs into painful and reproachful liberties, as in the days of Luther, as well as before and since, we must consider

* Sess. XXI., ch. 9. † Percy's *Romanism as it exists at Rome*, p. 17.

thoughtfully what his Eminence says to his London audiences in his lectures at St. Mary's, Moorsfields, already quoted in Chapter IV. "Religion is a lively practical profession ; it is to be ascertained and judged by its sanctioned practices and outward demonstration, rather than by the mere opinions of a few."*

But, as to the matter of this chapter, the cardinal says, "What is an Indulgence? It is no more than a remission by the church in virtue of the Keys, or the judicial authority committed to her, of a portion or the entire of the temporal punishment due to sin. The infinite merits of Christ form the fund whence this remission is derived.

"But besides, the church holds that by the communion of saints, penitential works performed by the just, beyond what their own sins might exact, are available to other members of Christ's mystical body; that, for instance, the sufferings of the spotless Mother of God, afflictions such as probably no other being ever felt in the soul—the austerities and persecutions of the Baptist, the friend of the Bridegroom, who was sanctified in his Mother's womb, and chosen to be an angel before the face of the Christ—the tortures endured by numberless martyrs, whose lives had been pure from vice and sin—the prolonged rigors of holy anchorites, who, flying from the temptations and dangers of the world, passed many years in penance and contemplation, all these made consecrated and valid through

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, p. 360.

their union with the merits of Christ's passion—were not thrown away, but found a store of meritorious blessings, applicable to the satisfaction of other sinners.”*

From this store of meritorious blessing, as a reserve fund for general use, grants are made to needy ones, here or in purgatory. The first has the dispensing power, and he may make a substitution of sufferings, endured by others, and not needed for their perfect salvation, and so left on deposit, or as we say commercially, subject to draft, for the benefit of others now under condemnation to suffering. “Such a substitution is what constitutes all that Catholics understand by the name of an Indulgence.”†

“It appears that in the ancient church relaxation from the rigor of the penitential institutions was granted in consideration of the interposition of the martyrs of Christ, who seemed to take on themselves the punishment due to the penitents according to the canonical institutions.” “From all that I have said, you will easily conclude that our indulgence and that of the ancient church rest upon the following common grounds: First that satisfaction has to be made to God for sin remitted, under the authority and regulation of the church. Secondly, that the church has always considered herself possessed of the authority to mitigate, by diminution or commutation, the penance which she enjoins, and that she has always reckoned

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, p. 365.

† Ibid., p. 365.

such a mitigation valid before God, who sanctions and accepts it. Thirdly, that the sufferings of the saints, in union with and by virtue of Christ's merits, are considered available towards the granting this mitigation. Fourthly, that such mitigations, when prudently and justly granted, are conducive towards the spiritual weal and profit of Christians."*

It is due to the fulness of statement of the doctrine as theoretically held, whatever "the sanctioned practices and outward demonstration" may be, to add these words of Cardinal Wiseman: "In Indulgences the church has no reference to the inward guilt, or to the weight of eternal punishment incurred by sin, but only to the temporal chastisement and its necessary expiation." "The church always makes and has made confession and communion, and consequently exemption from the guilt of sin, an indispensable condition for receiving an indulgence. So that forgiveness of sin must precede the participation of any such favor."†

An illustration given by this author, and in this connection, will place his meaning beyond doubt. "In the middle ages Europe saw its princes and emperors, its knights and nobles, abandon country and home, and devote themselves to the cruel task of war in a distant clime, to regain the sepulchre of Christ from the hands of infidels. And what reward did the

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, pp. 373, 375.

† Ibid., p. 376.

church propose? Nothing more than an indulgence.”* So the Council of Clermont decreed in 1095, “Whoever shall go to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God, out of pure devotion, and not for the purpose of obtaining honor or money, let the journey be counted in lieu of all penance.” “*Iter illud pro omni pœnitiâ reputetur.*”

* Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, p. 377.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THEORY OF THE MASS, AND ITS USE.

To appreciate the historical and doctrinal facts that we are quoting and the line of argument developed by them, it is necessary to understand clearly what is meant by the sacrifice of the mass. It is the re-crucifixion and offering of Jesus Christ. In the mass that vicarious sacrifice, with all its expiatory power, is repeated.

Dr. England thus defines it: "Under the appearance of bread and wine the Redeemer of the world is offered up in an unbloody manner upon our altars as a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. It is not a different sacrifice from that of the cross, for the victim in each is the same. . . . In the mass Christ is the victim; he is produced by the consecration, which by the power of God, and the institution of the Redeemer, and the act of the priest, places the body and blood of Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine, upon the altar. Then the priest makes an oblation of this victim to the Eternal Father, on behalf of the people, and the victim undergoes a destructive change."*

* Dr. England's *Garden of the Soul. Of the Mass*, pp. 4, 5.

The Council of Trent is explicit to the same point, that the true and proper Christ is offered vicariously in the mass.

“In this divine sacrifice which is performed in the mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in a bloodless manner who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross. . . . This sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and by means thereof this is effected, that we obtain mercy. . . . For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different. . . . Wherefore, not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities of the faithful who are alive, but also for those who are departed in Christ, and who are not as yet fully purified, is it rightly offered agreeably to a tradition of the apostles.”*

Therefore at the celebration of The Mass for the Dead, after the consecration, the priest says, “We offer before the throne of thy most excellent majesty in behalf of these departed souls, whom thy justice still detains in the pains of temporal punishment, this most holy, pure and unspotted victim.”†

And if the doctrine of purgatory and of the mass be true, then this must be most true that Müller says in another place: “The most efficacious of all

* The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. By Theodore Alois Buckley, B. A. Session XXII, Chap. II.

† Müller, p. 343.

means to release these poor souls from their painful captivity is, undoubtedly, the holy sacrifice of the mass."*

"Indeed, so great is the efficacy of this sacrifice to obtain relief for the souls in purgatory, that the application of all the good works which have been performed from the beginning of the world would not afford so much assistance to one of these souls as is imparted by a single mass."†

It is a most fortunate thing for the theory of the mass and of its power to deliver from purgatory, that some of those delivered have come back to earth and given in their testimony. In the time of St. Bernard, a monk of Clairvaux did this. When questioned as to the special means of deliverance, he led the inquirer to the church, where a priest was celebrating mass, and said, "This is the means by which my deliverance has been effected; this is the power of God's mercy; this is the salutary sacrifice which takes away the sins of the world."‡

A conspicuous instance of the power of the mass to relieve a suffering soul is found in the case of the Greek Emperor Theophilus. The Empress Theodora procured masses for her husband in all the convents of Constantinople, and so enlisted the sympathies of the patriarch Methodius that he ordered prayers for the Emperor by all the clergy and laity of the city.

* Müller, p. 51.

† Ibid., p. 54, 55.

‡ Ibid., p. 54.

While they were thus engaged in the church of St. Sophia, an angel appeared to Methodius, saying, "Thy prayers, O bishop, have been heard, and Theophilus has obtained pardon." And our Lord himself informed the Empress that her husband had been delivered from purgatory.

CHAPTER X.

OTHER METHODS OF RELIEF.

THE means placed in human hands for the relief of those suffering in purgatory are almost innumerable. They are as varied as human sympathies could call for, or human fancies invent. No mother could have a greater variety of pitying emotions, or show greater aptness and versatility in devising compassionate plans and tender methods for the comfort of a suffering child, than this holy mother church for the relief of her unfortunate and suffering children.

While the sacrifice of the mass has a preëminence beyond all comparison, according to the proper Christian conception of the infinite and vicarious value of the crucifixion, and may for a trifle be repeated and applied totally for the benefit of one in particular, or many miscellaneously, in purgatory, still other and varied and multiplied means for their relief are in daily use, and should be noticed.

The best authority on this branch of our subject is Müller's *Charity for the Souls in Purgatory*; for it is confined to this topic, and is a handbook for private devotions, of very recent date—Boston, 1872—and specially for a section or meridian where advanced science and religion combine to throw their

clearest light. It is no mediæval work, reëdited for a fossil Italy or Spain or Mexico.

“Lamenting, sobbing, and sighing, shedding torrents of tears and crying aloud, these poor souls stretch out their hands for one to help, console, and relieve them. We are the only ones who have it in our power to assist them in their sufferings.” Then the author proceeds to illustrate, by citing the case of the Emperor Henry, who was about to put a whole city, young and aged, to massacre, because of long obstinacy in not surrendering. The little children were sent out in long procession, and with bitter wailing and supplication that the city be spared; and it was. He continues: “Would to God I could open the dungeons of purgatory and let you see the immense procession of poor suffering souls coming forth and crying in most lamentable and heart-rending voices, one after the other, ‘Father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, friend, have pity on me!’”*

Then he makes these suffering ones plead thus for aid: “Tell Christians to give us their feet, by going to hear mass for us; to give us their eyes, by seeking an occasion to perform a good work for us; to give us their hands, by giving an alms for us, or by offering often the honoraries of one or more dollars for the ‘intention’ of the masses of the priest in our behalf; to give us their lips, by praying for us; to give us their tongue, by requesting others to be charitable to us; to give us their memory, by remembering us constantly

* Müller, pp. 44, 46.

in their devotions; to give us their body, by offering up for us to the Almighty all its labors, fatigues, and penances."*

In this extract the theory of the Roman Church stands out distinctly. She holds that there are many pious acts which we can do for others that nevertheless we are not obligated to do, and the neglect of them would not be sin. If we do them, we acquire a moral credit or merit for them. They have a spiritual value or worth with God, and we may apply that value or worth to whom we will, just as we make any other donation. If we apply it to a soul in purgatory, it goes so far to pay his debts to divine justice and hasten his release; as when we contribute to pay off the claims on some poor debtor, and so release him from legal suits and imprisonments. Any fatigue, pain, sorrow, fasting, self-denial, or sacrifice of any kind, thus voluntarily and unnecessarily borne for the benefit of a soul in purgatory, is, according to its pious valuation, a relief to that soul, bringing it so much nearer to its exit from purgatory.

A peculiar method of relief is suggested by an incident related by Father Clement Hoffbauer of Vienna, who died in 1820. He had administered the last rites to a dying nobleman. Soon after, the deceased appeared in a haggard, ragged, and pitiable condition to his wife, begging for relief. Father Hoffbauer, her confessor, advised her to clothe and comfort some poor beggar, which she did. In brief time her husband

* Müller, p. 49.

reappeared in white garments and with much joy, thanking her for comforting him.*

If one is heir to the property of a deceased person, the duty is binding and urgent to use some of it at once for the relief of the departed. "But if the deceased in their last will have left legacies for holy masses or other pious works to be offered up for the repose of their souls, then it is not only a duty of charity, but an obligation of the strictest justice for their heirs and executors to execute their will most punctually and without delay."†

All discomforts, pains, sufferings, and tortures, voluntarily assumed and properly borne, we have said, are works of merit, by which one gains credit or dues from God. These claims may be relinquished or turned in favor of souls in purgatory. In this way self-imposed trials, as fasting, bodily inflictions, and pilgrimages, may be borne to relieve some friend in the sorrows of the middle state. The following is a case in point. Müller says it took place in Dole, in France.

"One day, in the year 1629, long after her death, Leonarda Colin, niece to Hugueta Roy, appeared to her, and spoke as follows: 'I am saved by the mercy of God. It is now seventeen years since I was struck down by a sudden death. My poor soul was in mortal sin, but, thanks to Mary, whose devoted servant I had ever striven to be, I obtained grace in the last extremity to make an act of perfect contrition, and thus I am rescued from hell fire, but by no means from purga-

* Müller, pp. 73, 74.

† Ibid., pp. 89, 90.

tory. My sufferings in those purifying flames are beyond description. At last Almighty God has permitted my guardian angel to conduct me to you, in order that you may make three pilgrimages to three churches of our Blessed Lady in Burgundy. Upon the fulfilment of said condition my deliverance from purgatory is promised.''' Of course the pilgrimages were performed, and Leonarda was rescued.*

There is yet another method of relief that must not fail of notice; where one formally makes over all his meritorious works for the benefit of souls in purgatory. A paper is drawn for signature, with blanks to be filled, as a kind of spiritual quit-claim. A part of it runs thus:

"I sincerely promise, and I here offer to thee my own free vow, to wish the liberation from purgatory of all those souls whose deliverance the Blessed Virgin may wish; and to that effect I place in the hands of this most pious Mother all my satisfactory works, and those of others applied to me, in life or death, and after my passage to eternity. . . . And if, perhaps, my works of satisfaction be not sufficient to pay the debts both of those souls which the Blessed Virgin wishes to liberate, and also my own for my sins, which I heartily detest and abhor, I offer myself, O Lord, if it please thee, to make up by my sufferings in purgatory what is wanting for their release, committing myself into the arms of thy mercy and those of my most sweet Mother."†

* Müller, pp. 133, 134.

† Ibid., pp. 171, 172.

When St. Gertrude had done this and impoverished herself, the Lord appeared to her, and said,

“My daughter, your charity towards the souls in purgatory has pleased me so much that, in reward for it, I have forgiven all the temporal punishment due to your sins. Moreover, I, who have promised a hundred-fold for every good action, intend to reward you more liberally than you can conceive, by increasing your glory and happiness in heaven. Finally, I will order all those souls whom you have delivered from purgatory to come and be present at your death, and to accompany your soul, with hymns of praise and thanksgiving, to paradise.”*

With this papal theory of suffering in purgatory, and with all these varied means of relief coupled with this theory, there is an eloquence and a force in appeals to the living like this of Müller:

“There is a lavish expense for the funeral. A hundred dollars are spent, where the means of the family hardly justify the half of it. Where there is more wealth, sometimes five hundred or a thousand dollars, and even more, are expended upon the poor dead body. But let me ask you, what is done for the poor living soul? Perhaps the poor soul is suffering the most frightful tortures in purgatory, while the lifeless body is laid out in state, and borne pompously to the graveyard. . . . What joy has the departed and perhaps suffering soul in the fine music of the choir, even should the choir be composed of the best

* Müller, pp. 175-177.

opera singers in the country? What consolation does the poor suffering soul feel in the superb coffin, in the splendid funeral? Poor, unhappy souls! Those that loved you in life might help you, and do not for want of knowledge or of faith.”*

But many, through human frailty, will neglect to provide in due season for themselves, as about to enter the other world, and the frailty of human friendships will perhaps leave them to neglect when they are gone. There is much worldly wisdom, therefore, in providing against these failures and losses by a spiritual corporation or moral and religious insurance company. This the Romanists have wisely and kindly done by establishing what they call The Arch-Confraternity, for the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory. It was founded in 1840 at Rome by the Redemptorist Fathers, in the church of S. Maria Monterone. Gregory XVI. approbated it, and he and Pius IX. have endowed it with the treasures of the church to the extent of thirty-five plenary and over two hundred partial indulgences. Among the twenty-three advantages of membership, fully set forth, the twenty-first may be quoted as illustrative:

“Count, if you can, how many thousands of masses are offered up for the deceased members of the Arch-Confraternity. How many millions of prayers, of good works, of indulgences, especially those attached to the privileged altars and to the heroic act of charity above mentioned, which is certainly made by hundreds of

* Müller, pp. 16-18.

members of the Confraternity. Oh, what great consolation and comfort for you in the hour of death, and far more in purgatory, to have been a member of this Arch-Confraternity ! How soon must the souls of its deceased members be delivered from their place of torment ! Ah, when millions of tongues cry every day to our Lord, 'Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on the souls of our departed brethren !' his justice will be put to the blush, as it were, and give way to his mercy, either by releasing them at once from their prison of fire, or by shortening the duration and diminishing the intensity of their sufferings.' '*

* Müller's *Charity for the Souls in Purgatory*, p. 182.

CHAPTER XI.

CASES OF RESCUE AND ESCAPE FROM PURGATORY.

OF course it must be very gratifying to friends to know that their efforts to deliver souls from that abode of suffering have been successful. Moreover, this knowledge of success is indispensable to confirm the popular mind in the belief of the doctrine, and to increase the canonical ways and means to deliver those imprisoned debtors to justice. If cases of confessed deliverance could not be cited, there would be a great defect and deficiency in this wonderful scheme of Romanism, that makes so much of the middle state of souls. There would be one little area left on the surface of human nature that Romanism, in its marvellous swaying of the soul, had failed to touch. Hence there are cases of escape, secured by specific means, that have come to the knowledge of the benefactors by revelation or vision or apparition.

For a long time Sister Catherine of Paluzzi offered prayers and other means for the release of the soul of her father, and supposed she had been successful. But one day, led in spirit to purgatory, she made the sorrowful discovery of her mistake. Then she cast herself at the feet of her Divine Master, saying, "Charge me, O Lord, with my father's indebtedness to thy jus-

tice. In expiation of it I am ready to take upon myself all the afflictions thou art pleased to impose on me." This act of heroic charity was accepted, and the daughter had the unspeakable joy of assurance that her father was released. Yet her own substituted and solicited sufferings were fearful.*

After St. Vincent Ferrer had said the thirtieth mass for the repose of the soul of his sister Frances, it was revealed to him that, but for his efforts, she would have suffered in purgatory to the end of the world.†

St. Malachy, the Irish bishop, had a more trying, extended struggle for the release of his sister, though with a success well known at last. She had led a worldly life, but he followed her death with prayers and masses till he supposed she had joined the blessed. Then he seemed to see her standing outside the graveyard, pale and sad, and famished with hunger, as she told him. He understood her to refer to the mass, food for the soul, and so continued that sacrifice for a time. Then he saw her again, near the church door, but unable to enter. He continued his offerings, and again saw her within, but at a distance from the altar. At length, while he stood by the altar, after many and long prayers and offerings for her, she drew near, accompanied by a multitude of blessed spirits; and thanking him for his so tender and persevering labors in her behalf, she departed for glory.‡

So St. Gregory the Great said mass for thirty days

* Müller, p. 18.

† Ibid., p. 24.

‡ Ibid., pp. 52-54.

for a deceased monk, who appeared to Gregory on the thirtieth day, and told him that he was all right now.*

The only son of a pious widow in Bologna was murdered, and the murderer came into the hands of the poor mother. Instead of bringing him to punishment, she thought it would be more Christlike to forgive him, and so pardoned him, and adopted him into the place of the murdered son. This so pleased God that he at once released her son from purgatory. "The happy son then appeared to his mother in a glorified state, at the very moment when he was entering heaven."†

Müller quotes another striking case in these words: "When the priest came to the moment of consecration, he took the sacred host in his hands, and said, 'O holy and eternal Father, let us make an exchange. Thou hast the soul of my friend, who is in purgatory, and I have the body of thy Son, who is in my hands. Well, do thou deliver my friend, and I offer thee thy Son, with all the merits of his death and passion.' In fact, at the moment of the elevation, he saw the soul of his friend rising to heaven, all radiant with glory."‡

A woman of public scandal, banished from an Italian town, died in neglect, and was denied a Christian burial. No one presumed to pray for her, assuming that she was lost. After four years she appeared to Sister Catherine of St. Augustine, begging a few

* Müller, p. 56.

† Ibid., 78-80.

‡ Ibid., p. 57.

prayers and masses that she might be passed along towards heaven. The request was granted, and in a few days she appeared again, saying, "I thank you, sister, for your kind service. I am now on my way to heaven, there to praise the mercies of God and Mary, there to pray for you."*

* Müller, pp. 130-133.

CHAPTER XII.

AID FROM SOULS IN PURGATORY.

THE incident of the Parisian servant-girl, elsewhere narrated, opens up to us a separate line of facts and thoughts on our general subject. She, being out of a place for service, was led to a permanent home, and into all the comforts and privileges of adoption, by the young man whose soul she, by prayers and masses, had delivered from purgatory.

It seems that such aid from those redeemed is no unusual thing, and in their gratitude they are frequently returning favors on their benefactors.

"It is true," says Müller, quoting from St. Alphonsus, "they are unable to pray or merit anything for themselves, yet when they pray for others they are heard by God. The reason is simply this: these souls are friends of God; they are spouses of Jesus Christ, to whom gratitude is as agreeable as ingratitude is hateful. How, then, could God turn a deaf ear to the prayers of gratitude sent up by the suffering souls? God hears such intercessions willingly. Nay, he not unfrequently allows the poor souls to assist their benefactors in a most striking manner, not merely in trifling matters, but in great necessities of body and soul."

Then follow many illustrative cases, taken from St. Gregory the Great and others. "Whenever St. Catharine of Bologna wished to obtain a certain favor, she had recourse to the souls in purgatory, and her prayers were immediately heard." Indeed, she was often successful with them when prayers directed to the saints in glory failed of answers.

In 1649 a bookseller of Cologne, one Freyssen, had a very sick child, of whom the doctors despaired. The anxious father went to a church altar and vowed to distribute, gratuitously, one hundred copies of a little work on souls in purgatory, written by Father Montfort, trusting that souls there would thus be moved to pray for his child. Nor was he disappointed; for, returning home, he "found his child considerably better, and the day after it was perfectly cured." Three weeks later, his wife being dangerously ill, he promised at the altar to double the distribution of the books if she should recover. "On his way home he met one of his servants, who brought him the good news that his wife was out of danger." The father and husband must have had the double comfort of both restored health in his family and an increase in his book business. For two hundred books, given away in those circumstances, with reasons assigned and results stated, must have been a splendid advertisement of his goods as well as of his doctrines.

A certain pious knight was accustomed to pray for the poor souls in purgatory whenever he passed

through a graveyard. On one occasion he was beset suddenly and dangerously by certain enemies, so that he feared for his life and fled. Coming to a graveyard, he stopped and knelt and prayed as usual for those suffering souls. When his enemies came up they saw him surrounded by a host of armed men. Then it was their turn to be frightened and flee, which they did, and the knight escaped. To which recital Müller adds: "We may most piously believe that these armed men were the souls of those faithful departed for whom the good knight had prayed, and whom our Lord had permitted to assume those forms to protect their benefactor in his danger."

The same author gives a case even more interesting, illustrative of the fact that the souls in purgatory do remember gratefully and helpfully those who have prayed for them. The increased interest lies in the fact that the one aided is no less a personage than his late Holiness Pius IX. The facts, as stated by Müller, are these:

The Pope appointed to the Italian Episcopate an humble and retiring monk in Tuscany. He was greatly unwilling to take the office, and among other objections said he had a most miserable memory. To this Pius IX. replied, "At one time of my life I also was threatened with the loss of my memory. But I found a remedy, used it, and it has not failed me. For the special intention of preserving this faculty of memory, I have said every day a *De Profundis* for the

souls in purgatory." We share with Müller the surprise that he thus expresses in view of this statement of His Holiness: "It is a new revelation that our Holy Father, Pius IX., was ever threatened with the loss of memory. Of all his faculties of mind, there is not one that excites such general astonishment as his wonderful memory. It seems as if he never forgets anything he once hears. Now the souls in purgatory obtained this blessing for the Holy Father in reward for the prayers he was accustomed to offer up to God for their deliverance."*

We confess to an astonishment beyond what Müller here shows over the wonderful aid from the under world to the mental powers of His Holiness. Of course, the methods by which disembodied and incarcerated spirits could approach and develop and strengthen his faculty of memory must be mysterious. The laws of psychology and mental processes are not well enough understood to make the statement a subject of rational investigation and metaphysical analysis. The offered fact must be taken on faith, just as we receive so much concerning the incomprehensible, unknown, and infinite. If the statement is received with some tinge of incredulity, that must be pardoned to the weakness of an inquisitive Protestant mind.

It is interesting to note that this idea of aid to mortals from the departed is nothing new to Romanism. In the Hindoo Rig Veda, a collection of a thou-

* Müller, pp. 101-116.

sand hymns, ante-dating Christianity by eight centuries, we find this passage: "On the path of the fathers there are eight and eighty thousand patriarchal men, who turn back to the earthly life to sow righteousness and to succor it."*

* *Oriental Religions.* By Samuel Johnson. India. P. 132.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DOCTRINE INTO THE CHURCH.

ALL additions to the Christian systems, and all improvements, so called, of Christian theology, have been from small beginnings, and, but for consequences, we should call them insignificant. With his characteristic unfairness towards a revealed religion, the infidel Hume throws a sneer at the iota controversy, overlooking the fact that the question of deity or no deity there turned on an iota. In the investigation before us it will be found that the defection from the line of true faith is so nearly imperceptible, and to the easy mind so unappreciable, as to have the relations of the asymptote to the curve.

We have gone so far in this historical disquisition as to find a middle place for souls departed that is local and architectural—architectural, if that term may be applied to hall and cave, hill, cliff and valley, courts, avenues, lakes, lawns, and corridors. Here we have found the souls of the deceased, with bodies suited to a place whose material and atmosphere, and heat and cold, and total constitution and laws, are peculiarly its own. These souls are burdened with unfinished probations, whose completion they are incessantly hastening with agonies and anxieties and expectations. To

this end no form of toil or endurance is wanting that can be expiatory and punitive and purifying. All forms of guilt and every grade of each are here, wearing off painfully and with the months or ages its demerit. In this vast and awful crucible of the moral universe souls are constantly coming and going in crowded and disorderly procession. It is as if some hundred-gated Thebes, with radiating railways at each portal, should be constantly filling and emptying itself with the populace of an empire.

To stay the ingress of this multitude the church, Roman and œcumenical, is bending her ritual and ceremonial energies; and to hasten the egress of the multitude within, this church belts the whole habitable globe, day and night, with prayer and mass, vigil and fasting, penance and pain, self-sacrifice, toils, and tears.

The firm belief of these millions in such a place, with such suffering inmates, and in the ability and duty of the living to help and hasten them out, is equalled only by the sincerity, ardor, and painful devotion with which they struggle to deliver them. For, whatever may be thought of the inner views on this subject of the more advanced minds in the papal communion, very firm and devout convictions on it must be conceded to the great multitude in that communion.

How such a doctrine could gain a place in the theology of the church, and how it could attain to such prominence and power in one section of the church, is

another branch in our investigations, to which we now turn.

The introduction into the church of this doctrine and practice was from small beginnings and by slow growth. This wonderful departure from the simplicity and truth of an apostolic Christianity finds its beginning in an anterior deflection from the true line. As early as A. D. 150 regeneration was confounded with baptism. A certain magical power was supposed to pertain to the baptismal rite, and forgiveness of all sins preceding the act was supposed to accompany it. A century later this was common doctrine. Indeed, it was then supposed that forgiveness through the merits of Christ could be obtained only for those sins committed before baptism. Hence many, as Constantine, deferred the rite as long as they could presume on life. Then, as to sins committed after baptism, it was supposed that they were pardoned in consideration of penance and good works. So Cyprian taught: "The forgiveness of sin having been once obtained at baptism, we earn, by constant exercise in well-doing, which is as it were a repetition of baptism, the divine forgiveness anew."

The next step was easily gained—that if one satisfies not for sins committed after baptism by alms, good works, and penance, he must do penance for them after death in an intermediate state; for this Jewish, Magian, and Platonic notion of such a state had already gained disciples among the Christian teachers. Müller, already frequently quoted as one of the latest

Roman-catholic authorities, says in his *Charity for the Souls in Purgatory*, "The belief in this doctrine is much more ancient than Christianity itself."* And Neander thinks it probable that Cyprian is the first to promulgate this idea in the church, and that he does it in these words of his fifty-second epistle: "*Missum in carcerem non exire inde, donec solvat novissimum quadrantem, pro peccatis longo dolore cruciatum emundari, et purgari diu igne.*"† This wants but little if anything of the theory of the "*ignis purgatorius*" of the Western Church so fully developed afterwards.

Whether Cyprian stood sponsor at the baptism into the Christian Church of this notion of a purifying fire after death may admit of a question. It is, however, certain that this was the fruitful germ of that vast Romish aftergrowth, the purgatorial system, and that its incipient development in the church first appeared in the times of Cyprian, whose martyr-death occurred A. D. 258. If we pass along to the times of Pelagius and Augustine, early in the fifth century, we shall find that the doctrine under inquiry had assumed both a definite and a warmly-disputed position in the church. Its tendencies and fruits began so to show themselves that Pelagius opposed the doctrine as injurious to good morals. While he is full of sorrow for the moral degradation of the masses of nominal Christians in his day, he makes special attack on this purgatorial system as aiding to this sad degeneracy.

* Müller, p. 12.

† Church History, 1:654. Torrey's Trans.

Many in the church led a vicious life, assuming that an orthodox faith and a formal use of the rites of the church made their final salvation sure, though they expected temporary punishments for their sins in the future state of purgation. In defence of this comforting and corrupting expectation they pleaded the declaration of Paul that "the fire shall try every man's work," etc.

But this passage, Pelagius contended, taught the punishments of hell, which were unending. And to combat the same error he maintained with much strenuousness the eternity of future punishments. Hence, when he was summoned before the Synod of Diospolis in Palestine, in the year 415, he was accused of stating and holding this position: "*In die judicii iniquis et peccatoribus non esse parcendum; sed æternis eos ignibus esse exurendos.*"*

Augustine, however, took an opposite view, though with much carefulness of statement. He thought it supposable that the purifying trials of God's children might be continued after death for a longer or shorter time, as need might be, and in a purgating fire. His language on the continuance of punishment hereafter is: "*Tale aliquid etiam post hanc vitam fieri incredibile non est, et utrum ita sit, quæri potest. Et aut inveniri aut latere, nonnullos fideles per ignem purgatorium, quanto magis minusve bona pereuntia dilexerunt, quanto tardius citiusve salvari.*"†

On the other hand, the Council of Carthage, A. D.

* Neander, II. p. 584, note 1. † Hagenbach's *His. Doc.*, I. p. 382.

418, condemned the doctrine of an intermediate state, and on the ground that no third state can be conceived of between heaven and hell.

It was reserved for Gregory the Great to make this doctrine of Purgatory a necessary article of faith. He set it forth distinctly as a dogma of the church that must be received by all the faithful. "*De quibusdam levibus culpis esse ante iudicium purgatorius ignis credendus est.*"*

He also first taught in the Christian Church that masses and prayers for the dead avail to deliver them from purgatory. And if he did not clearly develop the plan of pecuniary commutation for sins, he more than any other one prepared its bold outlines, and led the way to that unblushing sale of indulgences which culminated in Leo X. and Tetzel.

But departures from a pure faith in times long anterior to Gregory prepared him for this bold advance. In the days of Augustine and Chrysostom, Neander tells us that there was "the delusive persuasion that any man, no matter what his life, could make sure of being delivered from divine punishment, and introduced into the community of the blessed, by the charm of outward baptism; which mistaken confidence in the magical cleansing and atoning efficacy of baptism encouraged numbers to persevere to the last in the indulgence of their lusts, hoping to avail themselves of this as a final remedy." And he adds that the same delusion prevailed "respecting the sanctifying effects of

* Dialogues, IV. p. 39. See also Hagenbach, I. pp. 382.

the communion," "of pilgrimages to spots consecrated by religious remembrances, of donations to churches, of almsgiving, especially to ecclesiastics and monks."*

The idea had also obtained that the sacrament of the Supper in its celebration was not simply commemorative, but also sacrificial, and as such efficacious. The officiating priest was supposed to act, after some manner, the part of a mediator between God and man, and Christ was supposed to become so connected with the elements, after their consecration, as to impart an atoning efficiency to the sacrament. And at this service, observed with this notion of its efficacy, intercessions were made for the living and the dead, and a peculiar power was supposed to attach to these prayers. Special pains were taken by friends to call up the names of the departed, on the anniversaries of their death, during this sacrament, that so its efficacy through special prayers might turn to the repose of their souls. So Cyrill of Jerusalem taught: "As when the emperor condemns one to banishment; but if his kinsmen present a chaplet in his behalf, the emperor is induced to show him favor; so we present to God, in behalf of those who are asleep, though they were sinners, the Christ who was offered for our sins." And so even Augustine: "*Oblationes pro spiritibus dormientium, quas vere aliquid adjuvare credendum est.*"†

Moreover, the patrons of churches and donors to churches, with their gifts, were publicly announced

* Neander, II. p. 224.

† Ibid., II. pp. 331, 332.

during this celebration, and public prayers offered for them. And all this, in connection with the sacrificial character of the Supper, was supposed to have a kind of magical effect for the spiritual good of these persons.

In this form, substantially, lay the material for this huge system of purgatory when Gregory the Great came to be a leading mind in the church. A little reflection will show that all the elements necessary for the system had been developed. There was the intermediate state and the purifying fire in it, the sacrificial and vicarious efficacy of the mass, the virtue of prayers connected with it for the repose of the dead, and the atoning power of alms and oblations and works of penance. These materials came drifting along the stream of the centuries to the times of Gregory. But they were not organized; they were *disjecta membra*. He had penetration enough to see that, united and developed, they would constitute a mighty instrumentality. He gathered and organized these elements into a system. Under his shaping hand arose, in its principal outlines, this vast purgatorial fabric. As none before him gave it definiteness of form, so none after him varied it in its essential features.

We turn, then, to a sketch of the system as it lay in his mind and was matured in his times and under his influence.

CHAPTER XIV.

GREGORY THE GREAT SHAPES THE THEORY OF
PURGATORY.

GREGORY, it will be remembered, received the highest honors of the Church in the chair of St. Peter A. D. 590, and died A. D. 604. He was strongly inclined to believe in a magical or supernatural efficacy in the sacraments and in the priestly offices of the church. In the celebration of the communion he saw the passion of our Lord virtually repeated. His words are: "*Christus iterum in hoc mysterio sacræ oblationis immolatur.*" The act of the priest at this service was, by virtue of his office, of a sacrificial character. It was the atoning offering of Christ repeated. And so, as often as the mass was celebrated, some at least of the power of the first and real sacrifice of our Lord pertained to the act, and passed over to the benefit of those for whom the act was performed. Yet it should be added, as due to his full view, that he insisted on contrition and the entire devotion of ourselves to God when we thus receive this wonderful benefit from the mass. In his fourth dialogue he thus states his views on this point: "*Necesse est, ut cum hæc agimus, nosmetipsos Deo in cordis contritione mactemus, quia qui passionis dominicæ mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus. Tunc ergo vere pro nobis hos-*

tia erit Deo, cum nos ipsos hostiam fecerimus." And as this supernatural power in the sacrifice of the mass could be applied for the benefit of any for whom it was celebrated, he conceived that its efficacy could be realized by both the absent and the dead. The notion of a preceding age had located many of the departed in a purgatorial state, till sins yet adhering should be cast off and due penance suffered. For the more speedy release of such, he taught that this priestly iteration of the sacrifice of Christ in the mass could be made. This position he fortified by actual testimony from the spirit world in those legends and stories with which his fourth dialogue abounds. Illustrations of these are there found in the stories of Paschasius, St. Severin, St. Malachy, St. Bernard, and others, as already quoted. In the same dialogue he states the position dogmatically in such forms as these: "Much profits souls even after death the sacred oblation of the life-giving Sacrifice, so that the souls of the dead themselves sometimes seem to ask for it." "They who are not weighed down by grievous sins are profited after death by burial in the church, because that their relatives, whenever they come to the same sacred places, remember their own kin whose tombs they behold, and pray to the Lord for them." This legendary evidence had wonderful power in an age so superstitious. Its misty, intangible, mysterious character magnified it.

The position thus taken, fortified, and credited, that the oblation of the mass thus availed for the dead,

the priests were of course besought earnestly, and with various and often very valuable presents, to say mass for the repose of the souls of dear friends departed. And as the efficacy pertained wholly to the priestly part of the service, the congregation gradually fell off from attendance. Hence sprung up the "*missæ privatae*," though under protest, when at the offering of the mass the priest alone was present. And thus came there into an accredited place in the church that broad portion of the purgatorial system that pertains to the efficacy of masses and prayers for the dead.

It is next in order to note the introduction and establishment of another important branch of the system, the Theory of Indulgences, whose practical workings we have already outlined. In this part of the process of constructing the system of purgatory and introducing it into the church, the coöperation and master-hand of Gregory are not so obvious, though the germ of the indulgence theory appeared before his pontificate, and its maturity soon after.

Anterior to the introduction of Christianity among them, the barbarous Germanic tribes, as well as those of England, had the civil practice of compounding crimes for money. A pecuniary mulct exempted from punishment for murder or any smaller crime. The painfully compromising and heathenizing spirit and policy of Christian missions, by which pagan notions, rites, and habits, were introduced into the church, were manifested even as early as the fourth and fifth centuries.

This civil custom of pecuniary redemption from punishment the early Christians among those nations incorporated into their regulations of church penance; and so, instead of the usual and prescribed satisfaction for sins, the delinquent was absolved for a fine. So Boniface, the missionary, says in a fragment of one of his sermons still extant, "We address you, not as the messengers of one from the obligation of obedience to whom you can purchase exemption with money." "Doubtless an allusion," says Neander in a note on the passage, "to the compositiones customary among the German tribes. Out of accommodation to this custom, against which Boniface seems here to be guarding himself, grew the indulgences."*

How early this custom obtained is not evident. Of penitential certificates thus granted the Second Council of Chalons, A. D. 813, thus speaks: "*Quorum sunt certi errores, incerti auctores.*" Certain it is that the custom prevailed in the fifth century; for Neander says, "Even a church father of the fifth century, perhaps Maximus of Turin, felt constrained to speak earnestly against the abuse of indulgences practised by the Arian ecclesiastics among the barbarian tribes, and which had sprung out of accommodation to these prevailing customs.†

* Neander, III. p. 52.

† "*Præpositi eorum, quos presbyteros vocant, dicuntur tale habere mandatum, ut si quis laicorum fassus fuerit crimen admissum, non dicat illi, age pœnitentiam; defle peccata; sed dicat, pro hoc crimine da tantum mihi, et indulgetur tibi. Vanus plane et insipiens presbyter, qui cum ille prædam accipiat, putat, quod peccatum Christus indulgeat. Nescit, quid*

Another species of commutation for ecclesiastical penance came into use in the Anglo-Saxon Church, showing a like tendency to the completion of the system of indulgences.

Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury in the seventh century, prepared a penitential system for the English Church. The principal punishment enjoined in it was fasting. And the time ranged, according to the sin, from ten days to one, five, seven years, and, in extreme cases, even to the remnant of life. But it was found too severe a system. Anglo-Saxon, not to say human nature, would not endure it. Then arose the species of commutation referred to. One advanced in life, or apparently nigh to death, yet owing a long canonical penance, was allowed to commute it in donations to the church, or he might "build bridges over deep waters and over foul ways," "help poor men, widows, and step-children and foreigners, free his own slaves, and redeem to freedom the slaves of other men, feed the needy, and clothe, house and fire, bathe and bed them."*

This idea developed into "a perfect system, which regulated with precision, according to the rank and wealth of the penitent, the price at which the fast of a day, a month, or a year, might be lawfully redeemed." This was for the sick and infirm. But it

salvator solet peccata donare et pro delicto quærere pretiosas lacrimas, non pecunias numerosas."*

* Thorpe, II. p. 282.

* Neander, III. p. 137.

did not work equally well for rich and poor. Egbert, therefore, Archbishop of York, modified the plan, and "intrusted it to the prudence of the confessor to enjoin, when the penitent pleaded infirmity or inability, a real equivalent in prayers or money. Thus," says the Catholic Lingard, "a new system of canonical arithmetic was established; and the fast of a day was taxed at the rate of a silver penny for the rich, or of fifty pater-nosters for the illiterate, and fifty psalms for the learned."

With this conformity to civil usage and the commutation of church penance to a fine, there at length grew up a confounding of priestly absolution with the divine forgiveness of sins. Closely on this came the fatal delusion, so pregnant with evils for a thousand years following, that immunity from punishment for sins here and in purgatory could be purchased of the priest. Not only so, but the sentiment prevailed that almsgiving, repetition of psalms and prayers, various sufferings and good works, when procured to be done through others, had an adequate merit for the absolution of him procuring them. For this reason men deep in sin sought to be enrolled as members of monasteries celebrated for their piety, that they might share in the benefit of the good works done there. Individuals hired others to recite prayers and psalms for them. They went through suffering by proxy, engaging mercenary penitents to endure the austerities appointed to themselves. The rich thane or noble would put his

* Lingard's *Anglo-Saxon Church*, I. pp. 334-337.

entire body of tenantry under penitential regimen, and appropriate the amount of merit so acquired to his own redemption. "At his summons, his friends and dependents assembled at his castle ; they also assumed the garb of penitence ; their food was confined to bread, herbs, and water ; and these austerities were continued till the aggregate amount of their fasts equalled the number specified by the canons. Thus, with the assistance of one hundred and twenty associates, an opulent sinner might, in the short space of three days, discharge the penance of a whole year."*

And so the Council of Cloveshoe, assembled in 747 for the reformation of the English Church, complained that recently a wealthy man, asking a speedy absolution for some great crime, affirmed that it had been expiated so fully by the aid of others in fasting, almsgiving, and chanting of psalms for him, that should he live three hundred years, he would not need to suffer any more penance.

But though this council and others and individuals reprobated this system of vicarious penance, and insisted on personal sorrow for sin, and placed many checks and guards and limitations around a purchased absolution, and the efficacy of the mass and the prayers of the living for the dead, the great body of the church felt otherwise. This was too easy a way for the sinner, and too lucrative and powerful a way for the priest, to be abandoned.

The system allowed too free a play to the propen-

* Lingard, I. p. 339.

sities of the natural heart to be given up. And besides this, the system had a kind of tangible, material, outside character, that suits so well the ritual and ceremonial tendencies of our nature.

The main outlines, as drawn by Gregory, were filled up in following times and in various places as sinner or priest felt the need. A schedule of crimes, and of prices for their absolution, as published by the Roman See in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was a matter of course. It was but a question of time to come to a board of ecclesiastical and penal assessors and to their Tax Book of Sins. That fund of merit, that vast spiritual exchequer, on which indulgences are drawn, as bills of sight, was a necessary part of the notion of penance, works of merit, and vicarious suffering. For if one may suffer and work, personally or by proxy, for merit, he may overwork. And then why may not the surplus go on deposit, subject to order?

The materials, therefore, for purgatory, and the outline-plans of the entire structure, and the structure itself well in progress of building, were in the hands of Gregory the Great when he died. At his death he stood related to the whole system, much as Michael Angelo, at his death, did to St. Peter's. That splendid structure he had planned, begun, and carried well on towards its completion. As the work crept slowly on to its grand consummation, the animating genius and spirit of the departed architect still presided, witnessing only variations that himself very likely would

have introduced as developments and improvements. And if ever finished, or in whatever stage of progress, St. Peter's will still be Michael Angelo's.

The master mind of Gregory still rules the papal Church in the perpetuated power of this structure in her spiritual architecture. True, like St. Peter's, it remains unfinished, and workmen are constantly adding in details, and with pleasant surprises. The very recent and remarkable aid from that ghostly region to his late Holiness Pius IX., in his faculty of memory, shows improvements and progress in purgatory, even in the nineteenth century. Still, the Roman purgatory is the great Gregory's.

It remains now to indicate, in summary, what material came to his hand, from the drift of the historic ages, with which he could begin to build, and to which his creating mind could add, as a supplement, anything needed. Material did lie about him, and in such abundance that his constructive and adapting, rather than conceptive and creating powers, were called in requisition.

Purgatorial theories and places and processes, well preserved and presented in the poetry and philosophies and religions of the pagan world, embellished with much legendary lore, were all about him. At that time Rome, semi-Christian and semi-pagan, as a centre of letters, was well supplied with all this. Not a little of it, as we shall see, had been already baptized into the church by the only partial Christian conversion of some of her leading

men from the ranks and ambitions of pagan scholarship.

We should doubtless be more lenient towards those who allowed the admission of the doctrine of purgatory into the Christian church, if we could appreciate the outside pressure that they were made to feel. All the old religions of the East were pervaded by a germ of this doctrine, and there was a universal force, outside the Christian system, to incorporate it into the dogmas of the church. That ancient and subtle idea of a purgatory would, almost of necessity, color any new religion that might spring up. This result will seem the more natural and probable, when we remember that many, educated under those old systems, were converted to Christianity, and came into the church with the moulding influences of a ripe, though pagan scholarship. If new creatures, old things would not pass away totally and suddenly, and a reverence for ancestral training and faith would hold them, perhaps unconsciously. Christianity, therefore, in the gristle yet, and not in the bone, would feel their shaping force.

While we here turn ourselves, therefore, towards the close of this historical disquisition, it will be necessary to direct our steps of inquiry backwards and upward the stream of human invention and opinion to find the very head waters. For, in any genetic exposition of this papal theory and practice of purgatory, the sources or springs are found in the historic fields, and then back of them in the mythic, shadowy,

and prehistoric marshes of paganism. The Egyptian, Judæan, Indian, and Persian philosophies abound with it, while it furnishes the heroic staple in the classics of Greece and Rome.

Of all the elements in the old religions that so environed young Christianity and foreordained their incorporation into it, the dogma of the preëxistence of the human soul stood preëminent. Out of this notion there had grown, naturally and among them all, the practical theory of a future purgatorial metempsychosis; and each religious system has shaped this theory to its own genius. For the idea of preëxistence almost necessarily requires, certainly has always begotten, the idea that the soul runs in a serial of manifestations or embodiments, each being probational, till the perfect and final one be attained. Theorists and dreamers, not knowing the limits of human thought on divine problems, and not content to listen only, where only the Infinite can speak, have found this conception of the soul in serial existences a convenient hypothesis on which to hang and air their fancies. Thus hypothecating outside of all known limits, they have found free range for unlimited follies, and have kept up the struggle of the ages by confident leans on the unknown past and daring drafts on the unknown future—an amazing credit system in the grand commerce of moral and religious truths.

Sixteen hundred years ago Origen propounded the theory that the justice of God can be vindicated for the different fates of men in this world only on the

ground of the theory of preëxistence. "It is easy," he says, "to understand that there were before rational vessels, both clean and unclean; that is, which either had or had not purified themselves; and that hence each vessel, according to its degree of purity or impurity, received its place, region, or condition of birth and action in this world." "Thus, then, as I may say, out of the clay of the same lump of rational minds, for certain previous reasons, he formed some unto honor and some unto dishonor." "If our course be not marked out according to our works before this life, how is it true that it is not unjust in God that the elder should serve the younger, and be hated before he had done things deserving of servitude and of hatred?"*

It is one of the curiosities of modern literature to find sometimes the débris of effete paganisms. We prize, of course, the antiques of the iron or stone age of a dead civilization; and we accord to the antiquary worthy credit for successful research among ruins and in old mounds, so long as he offers his results as relics, and not inventions or improvements. What has been foisted into papal Christianity and attempted for Protestant, has this pedigree and no more.

Under the universal and immense outside pressure on the new religion of the cross, it was too natural and almost inevitable, that the church should incorporate into her theory and practice the notion of preëxistence, and its irresistible if not logical inference of purgatory.

* *Biblica Sacra*, XII. p. 164.

We shall probably most briefly and clearly make this manifest by beginning on the most distant historical borders, where notions of a purgatory prevailed, and working our way thence to an accepted and well-organized purgatory in the papal Church. Of course we turn to Egypt, whose Book of the Dead is supposed to be older than any other sacred writings in the world.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PURGATORIAL SYSTEM OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

THE Egyptian theology set forth distinctly the doctrine of a future life ; for when Herodotus tells us that they held to the theory of transmigration, he reveals the fact of their belief in a life after death.*

The system of embalming is supposed by many to have sprung from the expectation of continued existence after death. As those early Egyptians were not spiritual enough to discern between the body and the soul and allow for the latter a separate and independent existence, they coupled the notion of immortality of soul with human embodiment, and so sought, by embalming, to purify and perpetuate the body for its immortal work of companionship with the soul.

“Let the bodily organs, it was felt, be saved from putrefaction, and the spirit also will have something left on which to lean for help as her companion and receptacle. In virtue of the strength afforded to her by this union with the former cause of her vitality, she will continue to subsist in some analogous condi-

* Herodotus, II. p. 123.

tion ; disembodied, it is true, but still associating with her previous tenement, and still in some mysterious fashion living by its life.”*

If there are earlier records extant of the supposed condition of man beyond the grave than those left to us by Ancient Egypt, they are yet to be discovered and published ; that is, if we are to accept the scholarly conclusions of a man as careful and reverent and Christian as Baron Bunsen.

The Funereal Ritual, or Book of the Dead, is comparatively recent authority on our topic, and enlarges and enriches our sources of information. Modern scholarship has but lately been able to read and make it public, though as early in the world as B. C. 2250 it was, in some of its prayers and hymns, old enough to be obscured by glosses and annotations. Even then it was so old, says Bunsen, “as to be all but unintelligible to royal scribes.”†

This Ritual is, of course, adapted to the Egyptian mythology, and parts of it are allegorical, poetic, and often mysterious. The lines of thought, however, bearing on our topic, run through the entire book, and are quite upon its surface ; for the ancient Egyptians were fully persuaded of a life beyond the present, and a life, too, affected by discriminating rewards and punishments. These punishments, moreover, were with

* Christ and other Masters. By Charles Hardwick, M. A. Part IV. Religion of Egypt, p. 82. Cambridge, England, 1859.

† Egypt's Place in Universal History, vol. 5, pp. 88-90. London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1867.

many, if not all, reformatory, and the subjects of them moved on in an ascending grade of being.

The quotations that we are about to use will be set in the best light before the reader if we first outline the design, composition, and uses of this Funereal Ritual. It sets forth in words the thoughts and feelings that a soul may be supposed, on the Egyptian theory, to have as it departs this life and makes its pilgrimage along other stages of being. The ritual is to that soul as the liturgy to a Christian worshipper—the thoughts of it being presumed from his heart and the words of it adapted and given to his lips. Yet it is more than a ritual and a liturgy and a litany. It is the hymns and prayers and confessions and creeds, the hopes and fears and observations, of a soul on its progress in the future state. Of all this there are, in the edition of Bunsen, and after the editions of Champollion and of Lepsius, one hundred and sixty-six chapters.* They might as well be called booklets and sections and paragraphs, according to length.

If these ever made up one volume, the book is lost, and only three chapters or sections remain, which had been copied out and enclosed with the dead body in the processes of embalming and of Egyptian burial. These copies have been found on the inner sides of the chests enclosing the mummies, on papyrus and pieces of linen, and on the wrappings and bandages of the mummies, and indeed on whatever would receive the writings or hieroglyphics that could properly go into

* Hardwick makes one hundred and sixty-five, p. 79.

the mummy-case. If these chapters ever had a logical or systematic or chronological arrangement, according to the dates of their composition or the progress of the souls using them, that arrangement is now lost. Excepting possibly some of later dates, as of the twenty-sixth dynasty and after, they came together miscellaneous as discovered or translated, and were like the articles of an encyclopædia unarranged. We now have them in groups, so far as a common thought would tend to bring them into clusters of chapters, Champollion leading in this subdivision and classification. These funereal papyri were prepared for the old Egyptian market, and became articles of trade, blanks being left for the name of the purchaser and for any other personal items. We have noticed that the same thing is done under the papal system in the preparation and sale of prayers for the dead and to the saints. These forms are for sale in many of the bookstores and churches at Rome and elsewhere.

The theory was that these forms were what the soul would need to use on its way when meeting diabolical and hostile agencies, and they were prepared for him to adopt and utter as his own when the occasion required. Hence they were enclosed about his person in the embalming, and placed within his reach, as some pagans bury food or implements of war or of the chase with their dead. "To the soul they assured a passage from the earth; a transit through purgatory and other regions of the dead; the entrance into the Empyrean Gate by which the souls arrived at the pres-

ence of the Sun [the Egyptian heaven]; and protection from the various liers-in-wait, or adversaries, who sought to accuse, destroy, or detain it on its passage or destiny."*

We have elsewhere intimated that the notion of a purgatory is found intimately related to the theory of preëxistence, and that such a process of purgation comes in naturally as one stage in a series of existences. This fact shows itself in the Egyptian system of religion.

"The deceased, in fact, lived again after death, or, according to Egyptian notions, did not die again in Hades. The first death of the soul was its birth into the world, imprisoned in the human form. . . . In the future or separated state the soul still continued to revisit the body. . . . The distinction between soul and body in the future state is not rigorously kept up, and the deceased is often described as if existing as a mortal even in the Hades."†

Here, then, in Egypt, if not to be found elsewhere and nearer, Origen, and after him the author of the *Conflict of Ages*, may find all needed material for that scheme of a sinful preëxistence of man, a punitive and restorative existence in this world, and possibly another probation in the next. Here, too, on the banks of the Nile, we find foundation-stones that, twenty-eight hundred years later, reappear on the banks of the Tiber, for the superstructure of an under-world purgatory, with a mystic confusion and semi-continuance of soul and body together, and occasional revisits

* Bunsen, V. p. 134.

† Ibid., V. pp. 134, 135.

to the upper world. So, as the crowned heads of Europe have taken from Egypt her monumental treasures and antiquities to adorn their own thrones and reigns, he of the triple crown has borrowed from the theologians and spiritual régime of that pagan and twilight land ecclesiastical strength and ornament for St. Peter's.

But items of fact from the mummy records of that dim past will best interest the reader and assure him of the pedigree of the purgatory whose genesis we are tracing up. The argument, in outline, is this: the Egyptian soul lives after death, being born again in the Sun—the type of the Egyptian resurrection. It reappears beyond the grave, and as the phoenix, their emblem of immortality, it enters the celestial gate, or heaven. In doing this it goes through regions of darkness and dangers and hostile dæmons, but comes out justified, with all corruption of heart cleansed away, and so enters on a new and perfect and perpetual life.

The chapter, section, or paragraph of ritual, found in the chest of the embalmed one, is to be uttered by him, as occasion calls, in his spirit journey. Sometimes it is written in the third person, as to be said for him. Often there is attached to it a rubric, or explanation, telling how it is to be used. So, under the one hundred and forty-fifth chapter, we read:

“Said over the passenger, who is in these pictures painted in yellow, and over the company of the boat of the Sun.” The sun is the symbol of heaven, and a boat is a symbol of conveyance to heaven.

1. This Funereal Ritual assumes and declares a purgatory similar to the papal as a part of the Egyptian scheme of salvation. We quote from the seventy-second chapter. This is often found in coffins, sarcophagi, and on other monuments and remains of the dead. It seemed an indispensable credential, or sacred writing, for the soul to utter, that it might gain absolution and speedy passage and happy entrance to Elysium. So the passing soul prays:

“Oh ye Lords of Truth, without fault, who are for ever, cycling for eternity! Let me pass to the earth, I am a spirit in your changes, I prevail through your magic spells, I judge through your judgment. Save me from the annihilation of this region of the Two Truths. . . . Rub ye out [my sin] in the purgatory. The wicked do not prevail against me. Do not turn me out of your doors.”*

The one hundred and forty-eight chapter has the title of The Staircases of the House of Osiris. This is to be recited to facilitate the passage of the deceased through the mystical region of Hades. What these staircases may mean, of which there are seven, it is impossible as yet to tell; but the implication is that the soul passes that way, and from the names of the keepers of them, the way is evidently beset with dangers and purifying trials. Of the first it is written, “The name of its keeper is Firepasser;” of the second, “The name of its guardian is Fireface;” of the fourth, “The name of its guardian is Purgation;” of the

* Bunsen V. pp. 143, 214, 215.

sixth, "The name of its guardian is Bringer of Fire."

Similar to this are the one hundred and forty-ninth and fiftieth chapters, the rituals by which the soul is supposed to pass through the fourteen abodes of Hades. Under this religious passport for the ghostly pilgrim the soul goes, according to the rubric, "traversing the secret places in Hell, prevailing against the Evil, passing the secret valleys, the mouth and path of which are unknown." The purgatorial horrors of this section of the soul's journey will appear in some quotations.

"Oh, Father of the gods, Mother of the gods in Hades! save from every evil thing, from all evil deriders, or pollution, from all evil liers-in-wait, from the wicked netting of the dead [deficient] gods, spirits, quick or dead!" "Oh, abode of the spirits! There is no sailing through it. It is of flame, of smoking fire." "Oh, great secret abode! Oh, the very tall hill in Hades! . . . There is a snake on it, Sati is his name. He is about seventy cubits in his coil. He lives by decapitating the condemned spirits in Hades." "The spirits belonging to it [Hades] are seven cubits in their thighs; they live as wretched shades." "Open your road. I pass by your faces passing to the good West. . . . No god comes out against me or opposes his face to me. If any condemned spirit, male or female, sets his mouth against me, or any male or female devil comes to me on that day, he falls at the block," loses his head. "There is a snake there,

Ruhak is his name. He is about seven cubits in the length of his back, living off the dead, strangling their spirits. Go back, Ruhak, biting with the mouth to catch his fishes, fascinating or striking cold with his eyes. Draw thy teeth, weaken thy venom to me, overthrowing and prostrating me through it. Empty is thy poison in this land." "Do not take me to the block, do not strangle my soul, as they wish to do to me; I am the passenger of the northern horizon." "Oh, the secret place of destruction of the gods, which has terrified the spirits not knowing its name! There is neither going in nor out of it. The great god who is in it, he has terrified the gods or spirits; with his terror he has terrified the spirits or the condemned by his roaring. It has opened with fire; the blasts are stifling the nostril." "Oh, the place of waters! None of the dead can stand in it. Its water is of fire, its flow is of fire, it glows with smoking fire; if wished, there is no drinking it. The thirst of those who are in it is inextinguishable. Through the greatness of its terror, and the magnitude of its fear, the gods, the damned, and the spirits look at its waters from a distance. Their thirst is inextinguishable; they have no peace; if they wish they cannot escape it."

Of these gloomy and fearful abodes Bunsen well says, "The description of these regions is in every way horrible. They are terrible to the gods themselves, not only as being inhabited by fearful demons, but in some instances as regions of fiery flames, rival-

ling in all their horrors the Phlegethon, or burning stream of the Greek Hades. A similar series of regions is described on the sarcophagus of the monarch Nekhterhebi in the infernal purgatory. The halls are ten in number, and the groans and screams of the damned burst on the ear of the passer-by in a mingled chorus of agony and confusion. They howl as lions, roar as bulls, squall like tom-cats, tinkle as brass, and buzz with the incessant hum of bees. They give an esoteric notion of the nature of the regions of the damned, rivalling the cold Hades of Homer, or the hotter hell of a Dante or a Milton. Whether they were of a purgatorial nature, or the wicked were detained there, does not appear, but a more minute examination of the principal tombs and sarcophagi of the kings will hereafter throw a fuller light upon the nature of the Egyptian Hades.”*

2. This Funereal Ritual of the Egyptians shows purification of the departed by fire, after the manner of the papal Romans. The departing spirit looked forward with dread to the boiling flames of the Egyptian fire river in the under world. To protect him against these the celestial waters are provided, the mystic Nile. In the seventy-first chapter the embalmed one, speaking from his mummy-case, after the words of his enclosed ritual-speech, says, “I am the Hawk within the bandages, passing through the earth out of the case, or the doors. Oh, seven Chief Powers at the arm of the Balance, the day of judgment, cutting

* *Egypt's Place in History*, V. pp. 152, 153.

off heads, breaking necks, destroying hearts, making blows in the Pool of Fire." The hawk was the symbol of the soul in its death-passage from the mortal to the immortal.

In its passage to Elysium, or heaven, the symbol of which is the sun, the soul must pass this Phlegethon, and is represented as going by boat; and in the one hundred and fiftieth chapter there is reference to this soul-boat and to the river of fire. The difficulties and dangers of the passage over it seem almost insuperable. "Oh, abode of the spirits! There is no sailing through it. It silences the spirits. It is of flame, and of smoking fire."

In the one hundred and thirtieth chapter the passage of the soul in the sun-boat to the sun is represented. As the Ritual is assumed to be divine or inspired, or the words of the gods put into the lips of the passing souls, so sometimes a god personifies the soul and speaks as if he were the soul. It is so in this chapter. The ghost-man on his voyage, and standing in his sun-boat, and speaking of himself, says, "The Osiris corrects his faults, he delights the Sun, and Osiris [the real god]. He has made his boat, he has gone forth. . . . There are no shades where he is. He has not been turned back by the Sun, or by Osiris; he has not been turned away for what he has done with his hands. The Osiris does not walk in the Valley of Darkness, he does not go in the Pool of the Damned. He is not in the fissure a moment. He knows no terror in the place in which he is, for he

can take his head behind the block of Setp." That is, he is immortal now, and decapitation in Hades will not destroy him.

One other case may be cited, illustrating the point that the Egyptians and Romanists alike have purgation by fire for their departed dead. In the ninety-eighth chapter of this Book of the Dead the soul is represented as standing in the Boat of the Sun and sailing for Elysium. In the passage he must cross this fiery lake, or Egyptian Phlegethon. Having passed this terrible and dreaded section in the soul-journey, the departed one says triumphantly in his liturgy, "I see I have not lain down, I stand, I live, I rise as a god. . . . I have flown, as a hawk, out of the net of the great destroyer. I pass from earth to heaven. . . . My arms pull the paddle, I go along to the never tranquil gods. . . . I have brought the ropes, stopping the wicked as I go along in the boat of Ptah [second life]. I have come from the Scalding Pools, from the Flaming Fields, alive from that great Pool. . . . I stand in the boat, I pass the waters, I stand in the boat, I pass the god. I stand and come forth from the mud, towed along. The gates of S'Khem have opened to me."

The case is evident. The similarity, almost the sameness of the Egyptian and the Papal fires of Purgatory flash up from old histories. If the papal are more clear in their lurid glare, and better outlined to our sight, and if they appear as better adapted to the soul needing and suffering them, we must remember

that they are two thousand years and more nearer to us. It is a long way, historically, from Rome to Thebes, from the Tiber to the Nile.

3. This Funereal Ritual of the Egyptians shows that souls, having passed purgatory, come forth into Elysium justified, as in the Papal System. It will be enough, under this head, to make a few quotations from the ritual declarations of the soul as it passes along and finally enters the better land:

"I have raised myself as a hawk coming out of his egg. . . . I rise and make myself entirely as a good hawk of gold, whose head is in shape of a phoenix. . . . I have prevailed against those making watch for me." Chapter LXXVII.

"I have passed the secret roads. . . . I have risen as a divine hawk. . . . I have crossed those who guard the blocks, having my head and my hands." The loss of the soul in Hades was well illustrated by that familiar chopping off of hands and heads in old Egypt. In the under-Egypt there was a demon head-man to decapitate the hopelessly wicked. "A road has been made to me. . . . Let me pass the empyreal gate. Guardians of heaven, guardians of earth, open a path to me. Let there be no stoppage to me. I reach thy place, O Osiris! Lend me thy strength, O Osiris." Chapter LXXVIII.

"O ye Lords of Eternity, let me come to you. I am pure; I am divine; I am spiritualized; I am strong; I am become a soul; I prevail. . . . I rise as a god from men. . . . Glory has been given to me by those

who are in the gate in this mortal body." Chapter LXXIX.

"O gods, delicious is the smell of your fire which comes out of the horizon. . . . Guardian of the corner, lead me. Give me thy arm. I keep a watch in the Pool of Fire. I come by [my] efforts. I have come, having the writing. . . . I have dissipated my sins; I have destroyed my failings, for I have got rid of the sins which detained me on earth. O door-keepers, I have made roads." Chapter LXXXVI.

Perhaps it will be enough to introduce one more citation under this head. These scraps of liturgy, inscribed or enclosed in the mummy-cases, had frequently rubric reading or directions for use on their margins, and sometimes vignettes or drawings illustrative of the lesson of the liturgy. Prefixed to the chapter from which we are about to quote is the vignette of a basin of Purgatorial Fire, with four jets of fire. The soul is taught to say in the liturgy, "Extract ye all the evil out of me, obliterate ye my faults, annihilate my sins; guard ye and give ye me to pass the pylon [gateway] to go from the plains." Then the Gods of Justice are represented as responding, "Thou mayest go; we obliterate all thy faults, we annihilate all thy sins. Thou hast been severed from the world; we dissipate all thy sins. Thou hast severed thyself from earth; thou hast dissipated all the sin which detained thee." Chapter CXXVI.

The case is plain. Certain conditions being supplied, the papal purgatory is a mere question of devel-

opment from these Egyptian germs. Add the time, two thousand years, the philosophies that are waiting to come, and the Christian revelations of a future life, clouded and corrupted, and Egypt's Book of the Dead may be published at Rome, in revised edition, as a Christian volume, under Vatican imprint.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PURGATORIAL SYSTEM OF THE ANCIENT
HINDOOS.

IN tracing the pedigree of the theory under investigation we proceed naturally from Egypt to India; for in the birth of the nations that became historic and made religious records, the land of the Hindoos comes next into prominence when we leave the valley of the Nile. When Israel was in Egypt, the people of the Pharaohs had a well-defined religious system. Their eschatology—the dying man, the migratory soul, purgatorial fires, and other pains besetting the way of the wanderer to a better land, and the liturgy for the soul in its passage—has been outlined in the preceding chapter. It has been shown, too, how far resemblances would suggest these Egyptian notions as germinal or protoplasmic to the papal theories of purgatory.

When Israel was going out of Egypt in the fifteenth century before Christ, the authors of the Hindoo system were coming into Hindostan. They came down from the heights of Central Asia, whence also, as from the primitive Asiatic cradle, the Chinese crept off eastward in their infancy, and the Iranians westward. The Hindoo invaders subjugated where they did not exterminate the prior nation, and the rem-

nants became the Shudra or lowest Hindoo caste. The religious subjugation was never total, and to this day remnants of the former religion still linger in the Deckan, while Brahminism there is proportionally weak.

The main sources of the information that we are about to use, in tracing the purgatorial pedigree from the Nile to the Tiber, are the Vedas and the Institutes of Manu. Sir William Jones and other eminent Orientalists fix the composition of the former at about fifteen hundred years before Christ.* The latter are supposed to have been written somewhere between the tenth and the twelfth centuries before the Christian era.

According to these authorities our life is a series of existences, past and to come, midway in which is this earthly or human one. The present is to be immediately followed by a punitive and purifying one, leading into a higher grade in another order of being. This idea of serial and progressive existence is central and permeating in the systems of religion that have shaped the sacred notions of Central and Southern Asia from Persia to the Chinese Wall.

The Brahmins "believe that souls . . . were produced long before the formation of this present world; that they were originally in a state of purity, but that having sinned, they were thrown down into the bodies of men and beasts, according to their respective demerits, so that the body, where the soul resides, is a sort of dungeon or prison. After a certain number of

* See Johnson, p. 88.

transmigrations, all souls shall be reunited to their origin, readmitted into the society of the gods, and be deified."*

The dogma of preëxistence was, with the Hindoo, an essential part, and indeed the prior half of his doctrine of immortality. Those old observers and philosophers noted the human fact of all centuries and latitudes, that wealth and want, success and failure, joy and sorrow, come with an apparently blind indiscrimination on the good and the bad. Virtue and vice receive alike one and the same tempest and dew, as if right and wrong were not inherent in the subject of a divine government, and merit and demerit were not discriminated by the governor. Hence they made the assumption of a preëxistent life of responsibility and of unsettled accounts, and regarded this life as a necessary sequence in the growth of being, and administered as a system of rewards and punishments.†

For men of their narrow range of thought and declarative logic, in that preface age to the world's volumes and centuries, this assumption solved doubts and gave rest. So theories have their cycles of movement and periodic revolutions across the philosophic

* Rogers' Religion of the Brahmins, p. 2, ch. 7, and quoted in Ramsay, 2, p. 356, or 363, note. The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, by the Chevalier Ramsay, Glasgow, 1749, is quite a thesaurus of antique learning on the Oriental Religions, and we are much indebted to it.

† The History of India, by J. Talboys Wheeler, pp. 75-78. Oriental Religions, by Samuel Johnson, pp. 517-520. Ward's View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos. London edition of 1822, vol. III., pp. 391-400.

heavens. This one seems to have timed its period by its third appearance in an orbit of sixteen hundred years. The "Conflict of Ages" is settled first in the thirteenth century before Christ, then in the third Christian century, and again in the nineteenth. The three settlements have a difference of authors, rather than of ideas, as a Hindoo, a Greek, and an American; and dropping out Origen as merely a "middle man" in the commerce of ideas, perhaps the "Conflict" was as logically settled, and as finally, on the Ganges as in New England.

To a Hindoo mind post-existence was a natural and logical sequence to preëxistence, and the dogma of a future life was accepted as a matter of course. Indeed, existence was unmarked in their religion by beginning or end, but was simply a series of lives that births and deaths opened and closed. "If life was followed by death, so death might only be the introduction into a new life; in other words, after the death of the body the soul entered a new body, either of a human being or an animal."*

"They taught that each successive existence was a reward or a punishment exactly proportioned to the good or evil deeds that had been performed in previous existences; that the poorest man might enjoy wealth and prosperity in the next life by being strictly virtuous and religious in the present life; and that the most powerful sovereign might be condemned to poverty and disease in the next life if he failed in his religious

* J. Talboys Wheeler, p. 72.

duties in the present life." Yet "if the soul be sufficiently purified from all the passions and desires of existence, it will return to the Supreme Spirit of Brahma"—the highest heaven of the Hindoo.*

"The various heavens and hells were merely a part of the moral system of the universe, where transcendent merits might be sufficiently rewarded and the greatest crimes be sufficiently punished."†

One description of the purgatorial regions of the Hindoos is fearfully graphic, making it quite like, and hardly improved or surpassed by, the papal. The resemblance to the grosser and more material Roman purgatory of the Middle Ages will be noticed at once.

"The wicked have six hundred and eighty-eight thousand miles to travel to the palace of Yūmū to receive judgment. In some places they pass over a pavement of fire; in others the earth in which their feet sink is burning hot; or they pass over burning sands, or over stones with sharp edges, or burning hot; sometimes showers of sharp instruments, and at others showers of burning cinders, or scalding water, or stones, fall upon them; burning winds scorch their bodies; every now and then they fall into concealed wells full of darkness, or pass through narrow passages filled with stones, in which serpents lie concealed; sometimes the road is filled with thick darkness; at other times they pass through the branches of trees, the leaves of which are full of thorns; again they walk

* J. Talboys Wheeler, p. 73.

† Ibid., p. 121.

over broken pots or over hard clods of earth, bones, putrefying flesh, thorns, or sharp spikes. They meet tigers, jackals, rhinoceroses, elephants, terrible giants, etc.; and in some parts they are scorched in the sun without obtaining the least shade. They travel naked; their hair is in disorder; their throats, lips, etc., are parched; they are covered with blood or dirt; some wail and shriek as they pass along; others are weeping; others have horror depicted in their countenances. Some are dragged along by leathern thongs tied around their necks, waists, or hands; others by cords passed through holes bored in their noses; others by the hair, the ears, the neck, or the heels; and others are carried, having their legs and heads tied together.”*

All this is coarse and physical, like the Roman purgatory, yet it accorded with their highest conception of spiritual existence. “Manu represents the vital spirit of the wicked as furnished with a coarser body, expressly provided with nerves susceptible of extreme torment.”†

The purgatorial stages or departments, for different kinds and grades of sinners, are outlined in the sacred books of the Hindoos with all the graphic and horrid characteristics that their dark minds could imagine. Their likeness and almost identity with the papal

* A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos. By William Ward. London, 1822, vol. III. p. 375. See also, *India, Ancient and Modern*. By David O. Allen, D. D., pp. 409-413.

† Johnson's *Oriental Religions*, p. 545.

abodes of the suffering will be noticed by the careful reader. There are for the victims, as assorted and grouped according to their demerits, the region of great darkness, the enclosure of rabid dogs, and another of ravening beasts, and another of all venomous and deadly reptiles, constantly worrying and lacerating the inmates; the chambers of burning copper and of boiling oil; the halls of red-hot iron machinery, a kind of under-ground Inquisition, to sear and tear the flesh of the guilty; burning iron images of females for the embrace of adulterers; precipices and almost bottomless rocky and thorny ravines for falling sinners, with birds of prey to pick out their eyes and feed on their living flesh.

No wonder, as Ward says, "The Hindoos in general manifest great fear of future punishment. Sometimes, after committing a dreadful sin, these fears are expressed to a friend in some such words as these: 'I have committed a shocking crime, and I must endure great and long-continued torments, but what can I do? There is no remedy now.' Sometimes these fears are so great that they drive a man to perform many works of merit, particularly works of atonement. If the offender be rich, they extort large sums of money from him, which are expended in gifts to bramhuns, or in religious ceremonies. If he be poor, he bathes in the Ganges with more constancy, or goes on pilgrimages to different holy places."*

"The Hindoos profess to have a great reliance

* Ward's View, vol. III. p. 387, 388.

upon the merit of their works, though they do not appear to be satisfied that any one ceremony will procure future happiness. One Hindoo travels to the south, another to the north, to obtain some salvation-giving charm; but after all, he listens to any new nostrum with as much eagerness as though he had hitherto done nothing towards obtaining heaven. King Indrū-doomnū, by performing austerities, offering sacrifices, and presenting gifts to bramhūns, obtained the power of going to heaven whenever he chose.”*

Of course many ceremonies for the dying and the departed are performed to ease and shorten the passage to the better land. So the dying one on the banks of the Ganges, if he has not delayed preparation till mind and body fail, orders the gift of a black cow to a bramhūn, that he may not be scalded at the boiling lakes in the middle land. Other and varied preparations are prescribed in the Hindoo Ritual for the dying, and they are attended to with great carefulness.

After death there follow many studied rites and costly offerings for the repose of the soul. “The offerings made in a person’s name after his decease, and the ceremonies which take place on the occasion, are called his shraddhū, which the Hindoos are very anxious to perform in a becoming manner. The son who performs these rites obtains great merit; and the deceased is hereby satisfied, and, by gifts to the bramhūns in his name, obtains heaven.”†

We invite particular attention to these rites and

* Ward’s View, vol. III. pp. 380, 381.

† Ibid., p. 355.

offerings for the repose of a departed soul, and their comparison with the Romish ritual for the same end. The similarity is striking in the processes to relieve the departed of suffering and hasten the soul in its sad purgatorial journey to the land of rest.

At death the soul becomes a ghost and assumes a diminutive body, not larger than one's thumb, and so enters the realms and custody of the god of the dead. Here for a season punishment is inflicted, and the body is enlarged for capacity to receive it. If the ritual for the repose of the soul be properly performed for a year, the person passes into another body and on to the heaven of the forefathers; but if neglected, the poor sufferer is doomed to long delays and wanderings, in his miserable little ghost-body.*

In the presence of an assembly, large or small, according to the rank of the deceased, the son or near relative produces sixteen gifts, and sprinkling them with holy water and repeating prayers, he offers them in the names of the deceased, that the departed may obtain heaven. Presents are then made to the priests, the sixteen gifts and other marked ones, are bestowed on the head brahmins, and so the first ceremonies

* We are tracing in this volume the pedigree, or transmission of ideas. An illustrative case comes in here incidentally. The dying Hindoo could not start off speedily and happily for his heaven, if deprived of the rites of burial. A thousand years later Virgil reproduces the same theory.

Portitor ille, Charon: hi, quos vehit unda sepulti.
Nec ripas datur horrendas, nec rauca fluenta
Transportare prius quàm sedibus ossa quierunt.
Centum errant annos volitantque hæc littora circum.

Æn. Lib. VI. 325 et seq. See also, *Odes of Horace. Lib. I: 28.*

are passed. Then follows the offering of five calves, with incantations frequently to keep off evil spirits, and a great variety of eatables, flowers, cloth, paint, lamps, etc. These all eventually go to the priests. The whole concludes with a feast to the multitude and presents all round. Sometimes elegant and costly bedsteads, gold or silver pitchers and dishes, bowls, cups, jugs, and lamp-stands, are among the gifts, up to an immense value. The head servant of Mr. Hastings expended one million two hundred thousand rupees, six hundred thousand dollars, in the ceremonies for the repose of the soul of his mother. Many beggar themselves in these provisions for their departed friends; and so priestly is the Hindoo law, and so interwoven into society this system of purgatorial relief, that "a person cannot inherit an estate who has not performed shraddhū." For if these rites are not properly and duly performed, intense and protracted misery attends the departed, and purgatory is prolonged indefinitely. A new body, birth, promotion or upward grade is denied to the soul in its little ghost-body, and it wanders and sorrows for ages.*

If we consider what departing sinners are led to expect, by the Hindoo creed, on their way to the court of the dead, and during their enforced residence there, we shall see why the sympathies and fortunes of the living would be engrossed to the utmost to hasten their deliverance. "They have to travel six hundred and eighty-eight thousand miles to the court

* Ward's View, Vol. III. p. 354-362.

of Yama [the judge of the dead]. In some places the road consists of stones, mud and sand, burning hot showers of sharp instruments, burning cinders, and scalding water fall upon them. They fall into concealed wells, grope their way through darkness, and meet tigers and other dreaded animals," as we have already shown. "At length they arrive at the court of Yama, whose appearance is terrible; his height is two hundred and forty miles, the hairs of his body are as long as a palm-tree, his voice is as loud as thunder, his eyes send out flames of fire, and the noise of his breathing is like a roaring tempest. His conduct towards them corresponds to his terrible appearance."* No wonder the Hindoo dreaded death, and went through such strange and ineffable sufferings and tortures, and received so much aid, when departed, from living friends, that this purgatorial region might be wholly avoided, or the journey through it be hastened and shortened!

In scanning this religious system of old India we find many points in their eschatology agreeing strikingly with those in the Papal System. In the stage immediately following death we find purifying and punitive and restorative suffering; the physical structure and furnishings of that intermediate region, with all the attendant horrors and dangers and agonies, would answer equally for the popular purgatory of the tenth century after Christ as for that in the tenth before. In passing backward from Rome into India we have

* Allen's India, pp. 410, 411.

become familiar with pavements of fire, boiling oil and water, and red hot iron and copper machines of torture. Then we find coming in at the proper place, works of merit and atonement by the guilty to avoid all this, or gain at least an easier and earlier entrance to heaven. Friends interpose by offerings and prayers and pains to be put to the account and relief of the departed, and so gain repose to their souls; all which is with great expense to the relatives, and to the enriching of the priests. Does it not look as if the Vatican had infringed on the spiritual patent of the pagoda for passing souls along to glory?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PURGATORY OF ZOROASTER AND THE PARSI.

IN tracing the development and growth of this doctrine along the centuries to its completion in the papacy, we pass from India, in order, to the Persia of the ancients. In this we, to a degree, retrace our steps from Hindostan to those Asiatic highlands where we found the emigrating germs of the Hindoo peoples and religion. Prior to that emigrating, and while yet the coming nations of Eastern and Southern and Western Asia were in one family stock, called the Aryan, a common religion underlay the whole, and from it there started off, as sects or growths, the religious systems that have characterized Asia from the earliest historic periods to the present time. Rawlinson says we may go back to "a time when the Aryan race was not yet separated into two branches, and the Easterns and Westerns, the Indians and Iranians, had not yet adopted the conflicting creeds of Zoroastrianism and Brahminism."*

* Ancient Monarchies, vol. III., p. 94. John Murray. London, 1865.

"There are some circumstances which might dispose us to believe that the ancient religions of Persia and of India were connected in their origin." Malcolm's Persia, I. p. 493.

"We are able, by the aid of the Indian Veda, to trace out with some distinctness the form of the original Aryan faith held before the separation of the Indian and Persian nations." The Avesta, etc. By William D. Whitney. Journal of the American Oriental Society, V. p. 378.

It is, of course, impossible to date the beginning of the system, Iranic, Median, or Persian, now called Zoroastrianism; for any religious system of human origin has a growth only and no birth, an era but no epoch. Zoroaster discovered, systematized, and augmented preëxisting materials, and so gave a name to the system. In ages following others modified the system.

Scholars have been much divided as to the age in which Zoroaster flourished. Sir William Ouseley, in his travels in Persia, places him about five hundred years before Christ. A learned Pârsî of Bombay, Mr. Furdoonjee, with great show of authorities, assigns him to the sixth century. To this agree such English scholars as Prideaux, Thomas Hyde, and Sir John Malcolm. Guizot places him in the seventh century, while the learned Dr. Martin Haug, who is much at home in this province of literature, thinks that Zoroaster must have lived at least fifteen hundred years before Christ. Rawlinson would not shorten this period by more than a century. This would place the life of Zoroaster almost parallel with that of Moses, or closely following, Moses having died, according to the common chronology, B. C. 1451.

But be this as it may, a few centuries either way among scholars, this system of religion, variously called Iranian, Median, Assyrian, Chaldean, Pârsî, and Zoroastrian, flourished in the days of Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and was a temptation to the Jews, before and after the captivity, that they

did not wholly withstand. The sacred writings of this religion once embraced twenty-one books, many of which are now lost. Those extant are called *The Avesta*. No one man is supposed to have written them all, and their composition is regarded as an accumulation of many years, perhaps centuries, much after the manner of the Holy Scriptures.

We pass to the doctrine of the *Avesta* concerning the future life. The souls of men were created in the long ages past and retained in the realms of light.

The ancient Persian and the Oriental religions generally are replete with this notion of a happy state of the soul, preceding the present, in which it apostatized; and of one succeeding the present, in which it will go through an expiatory and redemptive process. Pletho, in his commentaries on the Chaldean oracles, says that "the Magi, Zoroaster's followers, with many others, believe in the immortality of the human soul, and that she descended from on high, to serve a mortal body, to labor with it for some time, to animate and adorn it as much as she can, and then return again. The soul, when above, has several abodes, one luminous, another dark, and some filled with an equal mixture of light and darkness. Sometimes she sinks into the body from the luminous abode, and after a virtuous behavior returns again to the same place; but if evil, she retires to a worse place, in proportion to her conduct in life."*

But it is their destiny at length to assume human

* The Chevalier Ramsay, vol. II. pp. 419, 420.

bodies, and to go over the path of probation, called The Way of the Two Destinies. The good and the virtuous of this life, as well as the bad and the vicious, pass on together through death to a tribunal, where Ormazd, the righteous judge, separates them for due reward and punishment.

Of that double world beyond we have a graphic and glowing account in the fiction of a tour through it and journal, an artifice so common in mythology. We have illustrious examples of this, where Homer passes Ulysses through the under world, in his Eleventh Book of the *Odyssey*, and Virgil, Æneas, in his Sixth of the *Æneid*. Dante's *Inferno* and St. Patrick's *Purgatory* come in with the same class of writings, and have the same general design. These fancies, with many other similar and minor ones, mirror the prevalent religious sentiments of the age, embellished more or less by the poetic imaginations and liberties of the authors.

The old Avestan or Pârsî faith has not failed to avail itself of this expedient and commentary, and some quotations from the Revelations of Ardaï Viraf will serve as a good foundation for us on which to place the framework of the purgatory of Zoroaster.

About 202 A. D. Ardeshir Babegan obtained the Persian monarchy, after putting to death ninety petty kings or princes in the opposition. As the ancient religion of the empire had been much weakened, and specially by the conquest of Alexander, 330 B. C., and its consequences, and the ancient creeds and ritu-

als quite obscured, the king set himself to their restoration. He convoked an assembly of forty thousand of the sacred scholars of the realm, and unfolded to them his purpose. Then, by successive reductions and elections, to four thousand, and then to four hundred, and then to forty, and finally to seven, a choice commission was obtained to execute the royal purpose. These seven scholars, doctors and priests, undertook the restoration of the doctrines of Zoroaster and the Magian faith in its truth and purity and sanctity. The work was accomplished by sending the soul of one of their number on the tour of the spirit land through its two great compartments of joy and sorrow. With much Oriental ceremonial his departure is prepared, and his return anxiously and awfully awaited, while the six companions watch his soulless body—the king's court and the forty thousand standing an outside guard at reverent distance from the temple of ceremony. At the close of the seventh night Ar dai Viraf returns to his forsaken body and to consciousness, and his report of the spiritual pilgrimage of the under world constitutes *The Revelations of Ar dai Viraf*.*

His declared purpose in the revelation is “that all people might know the rewards for the good, and the punishments that attended the wicked doer,” in both heaven and hell, “in order that heresy and schism be

* *The Ar dai Viraf Nameh* : Translated from the Persian and Guzeratee Versions. With Notes and Illustrations. By J. A. Pope. London, 1816.

banished from the earth, and that the worship of the true God be restored to its wonted purity."

In the first entrance of Ardai Viraf into the spirit land, he passes Chinvat—"the bridge of the gathering"—over which all the dead must pass immediately after leaving the body. It is narrow as the edge of a knife-blade, very high over awful chasms and torrents, and exceedingly difficult and dangerous in the passage. Only the righteous succeed in the going over, while the wicked fall into the lower depths.

After passing, Ardai Viraf came to the throne of the righteous judge, on the one side of whom the golden scales of justice were hung aloft, and on the left were five thousand reporting angels, all whose words the judge could hear at the same time, and all whose written reports he could read at one glance. Here among the justified he meets all those of his own family who had died in the true faith. But not to follow the pilgrim from place to place, through each consecutive hour, let points of observation here and there suffice.

Here is a group in neutral apathy; they have neither joy nor sorrow, since in this life their good and evil deeds balanced each other. They can go neither to the good nor the bad, and their punishment, if it may be so called, is to realize the stupidity and degradation of neutrality. In the second heaven, for there are seven in an ascending grade, he found certain happy to that second degree, for a good use of wealth in life; but they could never go up higher, because

for indolence here they had done no better. So those who have been sluggish in their devotions never rise above the third heaven; and those who had carelessly used wet and green wood for the sacred fire were found detained in the fourth heaven, whereas they should have kept a supply of dry wood twelve months ahead. The practical turn that this Revelation takes, at points now and then, is quite refreshing. The lone soul is even led to a river made up of the sap and water from the green and wet wood of lazy janitors at the fire temples.*

The sixth heaven showed philanthropists, the friends of the widow and orphan, and good legislators and rulers, and the devout ministers in holy things, and heroes who died for the right, and faithful wives. All these were in the surpassing splendor of thrones and palaces, and pearls, and jewels, and most extravagant vestments, and charming landscapes, and the music of birds, and an atmosphere loaded with the richest and sweetest odors.

After witnessing the yet more surpassing glories of the seventh heaven, Ar dai Viraf is desired by his two conductors to prepare himself to see the abodes of the wicked and their torments. He soon arrives at a river nine lances deep,† of most offensive odors, and

* The Pârsî have such a religious veneration for fire that no impure substances are ever thrown into it, as hair, the trimmings of finger-nails, and the floor-dust. In the religious fire, green, decayed or wormy wood, and wood of offensive odor is forbidden, while sandal-wood with camphor, amber, and other gums of pleasant odor, are much sought.

† For so the Persians are wont to reckon, a lance being regarded as about seven feet.

abounding with most noxious reptiles, in which very many souls are floating. This river is made of the rebellious tears of mortals, wept stubbornly for the loss of departed friends. The conductors explain by saying, "To pray for the souls of the deceased is a duty we owe them, and is pleasing to God; but to cry and mourn is sinful in his sight." Soon after, our pilgrim perceives a soul just arrived, and fallen into the frightful chasms under the Bridge, and the prey of horrid demons. Near by a man is seen hanging from a tree by one leg, while fiends slice off his living flesh. This man had tortured and murdered the faithful of God. Another is dying of hunger and thirst, who revelled in all good things in this life, and neither gave thanks to God nor charity to the needy. A woman is seen suspended by the breasts who had been an unfaithful wife. Men are urged by demons, and with blows and stripes, to drink excessive measures of most noxious and offensive mixtures. They were traders who had bought by large measures, and sold by false and smaller ones, and had mixed water with the milk for their customers. One manacled victim is tossed about by seventy devils, and flogged with serpents for having been a tyrant to his subjects, while the tongue of another, much protruding, is covered with noxious insects, scorpions, and centipedes. "This man," said the interpreting conductor, "was a great sinner, a fomentor of disputes, a liar, a slanderer, and of the most evil disposition."

In one department of these horrible regions Ardai

Viraf finds another unfortunate whom many devils were cutting to pieces, regardless of his painful and piteous cries. The explanation is given: "This man was a wanton destroyer of animals, a man who never reflected that though animals were given by God for the use of man, yet he was not permitted to kill or torture them wantonly." This poor sufferer had been no member of a society for the protection of our dumb animals. The body of another is found totally immersed in suffering, with the exception of one foot. He had lived the life of a sluggard, in indolence and in ill-temper over the least useful act; yet once he pushed with that foot the feed within reach of a tired and starving sheep, and so it is exempt. A group is found with their flesh dropping, in diseases, from their bones. They had delighted in turning men away from integrity in business, and from the virtues and religion. One is pressed down and crushed under a mountain weight. He had forced collections from the poor, and foreclosed mortgages and taken exorbitant rents and usury. A multitude of fiends surround a poor wretch, while they flog him with snakes, and force him to rake granite chips in a quarry with his fingernails.

The explanation is significant, while it contains the key to the continuance of these purgatorial pains. "This man possessed himself of his neighbor's land under false pretences, and has left it to his son; and *as long as* it remains in his family, *so long* will this punishment endure." Here is the very fulcrum of

power in the papal theory of purgatory. The amount and the continuance of those under-world pains are in the hands of the living.

Yet this admonition is sent back by Ardaï Viraf to the living: "Let them not believe that punishments will be remitted at the intercession of those they leave behind; nor will the prayers of priests avail them; as they sow, so they will reap; neither reward nor punishment will be omitted. Proclaim this to the world, and let the dreams of carelessness and negligence be banished for ever."

In this old Avestan theology sin had a measure of due punishment that must be meted out to the guilty one, and then he could go free. It was for a later age to found and fund an ecclesiastical bank of merit, having for its capital the extra good works of apostles, martyrs, and saints. The idea was yet to come that by a kind of spiritual brokerage in cash or prayers, or the mass, this merit could be checked out and applied to the relief and even instant restoration of those suffering souls.

With extended and varied observations our spirit-pilgrim traversed these gloomy and sorrowful regions; but we need not follow him farther. We have obtained from him the theory and practice of the purgatory of Zoroaster.

He returns to the bridge, Chinvat, and finds there a great multitude who cannot pass it. Their lamentation is, "For want of heirs, to hand our name to posterity, we cannot pass the bridge, but wander up and

down in an uncomfortable manner, without enjoyment. We are in sight of heaven. . . . Report to our families, O Ardai Viraf, our miserable situation, that sons may be adopted in our names, that we may be enabled to pass the bridge; and let it be known that to hand our names to posterity is one of the highest duties we owe our Creator." And so soon as this adoption takes place and is known at Chinvat the childless one passes over. This theory of the necessity of heirs, natural or adopted, is common to the Zoroastrian, the Hindoo, and the Mohammedan, and is compactly stated in the Institutes of Menu, that "a man is perfect when he consists of three—his wife, himself, and his son."*

Ardai Viraf found others at the bridge awaiting the arrival, through death, of those whom they had injured, and whose forgiveness was indispensable before they could pass over into bliss. As the restoration and happy progress of the former depended on adoption, so these awaited the pardon of those whom they had offended. In each case human hands could pass them along heavenward.

At the end of the seventh night Ardai Viraf reascended to the upper air and made his report.

"Immediately after death," says Rawlinson, "the souls of men, both good and bad, proceed together along an appointed path to 'the bridge of the gathering,' Chinvat. This was a narrow road conducting to heaven, or paradise, over which the souls of the pious

* Institutes of Menu, vol. IX. p. 45.

alone could pass, while the wicked fell from it into the gulf below, where they found themselves in the place of punishment."*

An Avestan fragment thus describes this tribunal: "On the soaring bridge the soul meets Rashne-rast, the angel of justice, who tries those that present themselves before him. If the merits prevail, a figure of dazzling substance, radiating glory and fragrance, advances and accosts the justified soul, saying, 'I am thy good angel; I was pure at the first, but thy good deeds have made me purer;' and the happy one is straightway led to paradise. But when the vices outweigh the virtues, a dark and frightful image, featured with ugliness, and exhaling a noisome smell, meets the condemned soul, and cries, 'I am thy evil spirit; bad myself, thy crimes have made me worse.' Then the culprit staggers on his uncertain foothold, is hurled from the dizzy causeway, and precipitated into the gulf which yawns horribly below."†

Of this bridge the Avesta thus speaks: "Creator! Where are those tribunes, where do they assemble, where do they come together, at which a man of the corporeal world gives account for his soul? . . . To the bridge Chinvat, the created by Ahura-Mazda, where they interrogate the consciousness and the soul regarding the conduct."‡

* Ancient Monarchies, vol. III. pp. 115, 116.

† History of the Doctrine of a Future Life. By W. R. Alger, pp. 136, 137. G. W. Childs, Philadelphia, 1864.

‡ Spiegel's Avesta: Bleeck's translation, Vendidad - Fargard, vol. XIX. vv. 89, 96. Hertford, Eng., 1864.

Elsewhere the departing soul is represented as saying, "I enter on the shining way; may the fearful terror of hell not overcome me! May I step over the bridge Chinvat, may I attain paradise with much perfume and all enjoyments and all brightness."* "I praise the mid-world, the self-created, and the bridge Chinvat, created by Ahura-Mazda."†

The "mid-world" here is *Miçvana*, "the world in which the souls are placed whose good and bad deeds are equally balanced. *Miçvana* is between heaven and earth, and the souls in it have to suffer both cold and heat."‡

An intermediate state for the dead, and punishments and sufferings of a purifying and restoring character, were essentials in the *Pârsî* faith. The duration of suffering is fixed arbitrarily by Ormazd and by the necessities of the case, in the demerits and wants of the individual. But as to the length of time, it is stated with an affluent, Oriental indefiniteness. It is run off into symbolic days and nights, with poetic license, and herein corresponds to the thousands and hundreds of thousands of years that papal indulgences cover. In some cases the pangs of a day and a night are made equal to the agonies of three thousand years.

The good, as the bad, are represented as making progress by stages of space or time, or both.

"When a pure man dies, where does his soul

* Spiegel's *Khordah-Avesta*, vol. XIV. v. 6.

† *Ibid.*, *Vendidad-Fargard*, vol. XIX. v. 122.

‡ Spiegel's Note to *Vendidad-Fargard*, vol. XIX. v. 122.

dwell during this night? Then answered Ahura-Mazda: Near his head it sets itself down, reciting the Gâthâ Ustavaiti, praying happiness for itself. On this night the soul sees as much joyfulness as the whole living world possesses." So during three nights the soul goes through the same experiences. "The soul of the pure man goes the first step and arrives in Humata; the soul of the pure man takes the second step and arrives at Hukhta; it goes the third step and arrives at Havarsta; the soul of the pure man takes the fourth step, and arrives at the Eternal Lights." Then that soul passes into the fourth and final Paradise. "When a wicked one dies where does the soul dwell throughout this night? Then answered Ahura-Mazda: There, O pure Zarathustra, near the head it runs about, while it utters the prayer Ke-Manm. . . . In this night the soul sees as much unjoyfulness as the whole living world." The guilty one, as the innocent, has the three nights or stages. "The fourth step takes the soul of the wicked man and arrives at the darkness without beginning. . . . Bring hither food, poison and mixed with poison, for that is the food for a youth who thinks, speaks, and does evil—belongs to the wicked land after his death."*

In tracing this Pârsî doctrine only so far, we discover strong resemblances or prototypes of the corresponding papal one; but a more marked likeness

* Spiegel's Avesta, Bleek's Translation; Khordah-Avesta, vol. XXXVIII.

appears in the Zoroastrian theory and practice of prayers for the dead. Says Rawlinson, "The prayers of his friends in this world were of much avail to the deceased, and greatly helped him on his journey."*

"The duration of the punishment is fixed by Ormazd, and some are redeemed earlier by means of the prayers and intercessions of their friends, but many must remain till the resurrection of the dead."†

For the systematic ministration of such relief by living saints "there was a yearly solemnity, called The Festival for the Dead, still observed by the Parsees, held at the season when it was thought that that portion of the sinful departed who had ended their penance were raised from Dutsakh to earth, from earth to Garotman. Du Perron says that this took place only during the last five days of the year, when the souls of all the deceased sinners who were undergoing punishment had permission to leave their confinement and visit their relatives; after which, those not yet purified were to return, but those for whom a sufficient atonement had been made were to proceed to Paradise."‡

In this Festival for the Dead we find an outline and the substantial elements of the All Souls' Day of the Romanist. The similarity of condition of the souls to be relieved, the theory of relief, and the methods of aid, have a remarkable agreement. All Souls'

* Ancient Monarchies, vol. III. p. 116.

† Ten Great Religions, by James Freeman Clarke, p. 200.

‡ The Doctrine of a Future Life, by W. R. Alger, p. 137.

Day "is a day instituted by the church in memory of all the faithful departed, that by the prayers and suffrages of the living they may be freed out of their purgatory pains and come to everlasting rest."*

In this Zoroastrian purgatory we find gross physical qualities, as foul and loathsome places, cold, heat, and other intense bodily pains, fiendish tormenting companions, cycles of time in purifying suffering, and slow stages of growth in purity to a full redemption, towards which the prayers and offerings of the living do much hasten the guilty and agonized ones. In perusing this scheme of the ancient Persians, the thoughtful reader will find it quite impossible to suppress suggestions and comparisons concerning the later and more detailed scheme of the modern Romanists for the same purpose. This is the Zoroastrian, Pârsî, or Avestan religion in the department of the future life.

We shall not give full credit to the system of Zoroaster as a power to modify the coming Christian faith unless we regard its wide geographical sweep. Persia proper, that gave the name of Pârsî to the system, was not a large country, being less than five hundred miles in length and two hundred or so in width. But the doctrines of Zoroaster travelled with the Persian kings to the limits of their wide domain, an extent of country little less than three thousand miles from east to west, with a width varying from five hundred to fifteen hundred miles. It went up the valley

* Douay Catechism.

of the Indus from its mouth to the northern and eastern boundaries of Turkestan; thence westward by the Caspian and Black Seas to Constantinople; thence following the shores of the Mediterranean and sweeping up the valley of the Nile, it took in Egypt and then Arabia, and so returned by the Persian Gulf to the starting point. These were the limits of the Persian Empire at the height of its glory, from about B. C. 506 to B. C. 479. Speaking generally, its grandeur covered the times of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. Under Cyrus, Cambyzes, Smerdis the Impostor, Darius, and Xerxes, the religious system of Zoroaster was carried beyond the narrow bounds of old Persia to the imperial limits that we have indicated—an area larger than the Roman Empire in its greatest extent by four hundred thousand square miles.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GREEK PURGATORY.

THE Christian Church of the first centuries was trained much in the Grecian school. This will not seem strange to one who considers the wonderful language and varied literature and masterly authors in that school. It led the thinking world, and gave many leading fathers to the church. These, first educated in their own Grecian theology, naturally carried many of their views with them into their new theology. But of such results we shall give more full notice by-and-by. Now we propose to notice the theory, teachings, and literature of the Greeks concerning purgatory.

In showing the prevalence of the purgatorial system in the various sects and shades of the Grecian schools of philosophy, a reference here and there will be sufficient. These references, however, can be properly introduced only by certain poetic photographs of that middle kingdom, taken by Homer centuries before Greece could boast of a philosopher.*

When Ulysses had gained his prayer to leave the hated island of Circe for Ithaca, his home, the enchanting goddess said to him,

* The quotations from Homer are from Bryant's Translation.

"But ye have yet to make
Another voyage, and must visit first
The abode of Pluto, and of Proserpine,
His dreaded queen, and there consult the soul
Of the blind seer, Tiresias."

"There into Acheron are poured the streams
Of Pyriphlegethon, and of that arm
Of Styx, Cocytus.

"Offer there thy prayer
Fervently to that troop of airy forms,
And make the vow that thou wilt sacrifice
When thou at last shalt come to Ithaca."

Ulysses and his company departed with sorrow and forebodings on their voyage and visit to the under world. They at length arrive at a land and people of

"Eternal cloud
And darkness. Never does the glorious sun
Look on them with his rays when he goes up
Into the starry sky, nor when again
He sinks from heaven to earth. Unwholesome night
O'erhangs the wretched race."

When they had landed, Ulysses offered the sacrifices prescribed by Circe.

"When I had worshipped thus with prayer and vows
The nations of the dead, I took the sheep
And pierced their throats above the hollow trench.
The blood flowed dark; and thronging round me came
Souls of the dead from Erebus—young wives,
And maids unwedded, men worn out with years
And toil, and virgins of a tender age
In their new grief, and many a warrior slain
In battle, mangled by the spear, and clad
In bloody armor, who about the trench
Flitted on every side, now here, now there,
With gibbering cries, and I grew pale with fear."

Homer was the first photographer who traversed that horrid region and took pictures from the grim

walls of its Tartarian caverns, or caught originals from the living as the shadowy ones glided about over the plains of asphodel.

Let us open this Homeric portfolio of pictures from the original purgatory, glancing at single faces or groups of figures as they happen to come to us.

When Ulysses left the Isle of Circe, in the hurry of the early morning, one of his friends, heavy with wine and half awake, fell headlong from the flat roof of the palace and broke his neck, and so was lost from the company when they embarked. Surprised to meet him there in the realm of Pluto, Ulysses said,

"How camest thou,
Elpenor, hither into these abodes
Of night and darkness? Thou hast made more speed,
Although on foot, than I in my good ship.
I spake; the phantom sobbed, and answered me,
'Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise
Ulysses, 't was the evil doom decreed
By some divinity, and too much wine,
That wrought my death.'"

The type of purgatory, and specially the cause of entrance here brought out, are not exclusively pagan or papal.

"And then the soul of Anticleia came—
My own dead mother, daughter of the King
Autolycus, large-minded. Her I left
Alive what time I sailed for Troy, and now
I wept to see her there, and pitied her.
. She knew me suddenly,
And said in piteous tones these wingéd words:
'How didst thou come, my child, a living man,
Into this place of darkness? Difficult
It is for those who breathe the breath of life

To visit these abodes, through which are rolled
Great rivers, fearful floods.'
. . . . I longed to take into my arms
The soul of my dead mother. Thrice I tried,
Moved by a strong desire, and thrice the form
Passed through them, like a shadow or a dream."

We give samples from the portfolio in variety, so that the impression may be average of that strange abode.

"Then saw I Leda, wife of Tyndarus,
Who bore to Tyndarus two noble sons—
Castor, the horseman ; Pollux, skilled to wield
The cestus. Both of them have still a place
Upon the fruitful earth ; for Jupiter
Gave them such honor that they live by turns
Each one a day, and then are with the dead
Each one by turns.

And Mæra I beheld, and Clymene
And Eriphyle, hateful in her guilt,
Who sold her husband for a price in gold."

But the catalogue of Ulysses, culled from the census-tables of Pluto's kingdom, is a long one, and he wearies, as the hours go by, in his minstrel story.

"But vainly might I think to name them all—
The wives and daughters of heroic men
Whom I beheld—for first the ambrosial night
Would wear away."

His audience, however, will not be denied.

"Now say, and frankly, didst thou also see
Any of those heroic men who went
With thee to Troy, and in that region met
Their fate? A night immeasurably long
Is yet before us. Let us have thy tale
Of wonders. I could listen till the break
Of hallowed morning, if thou canst endure
So long to speak of hardships thou hast borne."

Thus encouraged and urged, Ulysses continues his personal narrative of the tour of purgatory. It would seem that souls of women had crowded most about him, as curious and importunate. Now the scene changes.

“When chaste Proserpina had made the ghosts
Of women scatter right and left, there came
The soul of Agamemnon, Atreus’ son.
. He knew me at a look,
And wailed aloud, and, bursting into tears,
Stretched out his hands to touch me; but no power
Was there of grasp or pressure, such as once
Dwelt in those active limbs. I could not help
But weep at sight of him.”

Agamemnon had been slain at a banquet, by the treachery of his wife Clytemnestra; and when Ulysses asks for the cause of his death, he states the fact most practically. The Roman purgatory is famed for its good preaching by some of its sad inmates; but for force and beauty few of them exceed the old Greek warrior in this:

“I heard Cassandra’s piteous cry,
The cry of Priam’s daughter, stricken down
By treacherous Clytemnestra at my side.
And there I lay, and, dying, raised my hands
To grasp my sword. The shameless woman went
Her way, nor stayed to close my eyes, nor press
My mouth into its place, although my soul
Was on its way to Hades. There is naught
That lives more horrible, more lost to shame,
Than is the woman who has brought her mind
To compass deeds like these—the wretch who plans
So foul a crime—the murder of the man
Whom she a virgin wedded. . . .

Therefore be not compliant to thy wife,
Nor let her hear from thee whatever lies
Within thy knowledge. Tell her but a part,
And keep the rest concealed."

The ghost of Achilles is met by our under-world wanderer, and Ulysses congratulates him upon the fact that he is ruler over those vast regions of the dead. But this sad reply is made from his phantom lips :

"I would be
A laborer on earth, and serve for hire
Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,
Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down
To death."

Ambition has no ends to gain in that dark land ; the business rather is to make amends for sins and errors here, and so pass on to a better estate. Yet the great warrior is comforted with what is told him of the prowess and victories and wide fame of his son.

"The soul of swift Eacides
Over the meadows thick with asphodel
Departed with long strides, well pleased to hear
From me the story of his son's renown."

It was an unfortunate interview when Ulysses and Ajax met ; for they had not come together face to face since their mighty struggle for the arms of the dead Achilles. In that contest Ajax was defeated, and in the delirium of his disappointment he slew the sheep about the camp, supposing they were the partisans of his successful rival. When recovered from the frenzy he saw his mistake, his mortification was intolerable, and he ended it with his life in suicide, and so hastened to Hades. But his anger died not in the grave.

The old pagan theology was orthodox in that a man takes his character with him to the nether world.

"The other ghosts of those who lay in death
 Stood sorrowing by, and each one told his griefs ;
 But that of Ajax, son of Telemon,
 Kept far aloof, displeased.
 Then I spake in soothing words,
 'O king, draw near,
 And hear our voice and words, and check, I pray,
 The anger rising in thy generous breast.'
 I spake ; he answered not, but moved away
 To Erebus, among the other souls
 Of the departed."

Some cases of terrible retribution are sketched, as when a master, with a few lines, puts on the canvas a face that speaks.

"And Tityus there I saw—the mighty earth
 His mother—overspreading, as he lay,
 Nine acres, with two vultures at his side,
 That, plucking at his liver, plunged their beaks
 Into his flesh ; nor did his hands avail
 To drive them off, for he had offered force
 To Jove's proud wife, Latona.

And next I looked on Tantalus, a prey
 To grievous torments, standing in a lake
 That reached his chin. Though painfully athirst,
 He could not drink ; as often as he bowed
 His aged head to take into his lips
 The water, it was drawn away, and sank
 Into the earth, and the dark soil appeared
 Around his feet ; a god had dried it up.
 And lofty trees drooped o'er him, hung with fruit—
 Pears and pomegranates, apples fair to sight,
 And luscious figs, and olives green of hue.
 And when that ancient man put forth his hands
 To pluck them from their stems, the wind arose
 And whirled them far among the shadowy clouds.

Then I beheld the shade of Sisyphus
 Amid his sufferings. With both hands he rolled
 A huge stone up a hill. To force it up,
 He leaned against the mass with hands and feet;
 But, ere it crossed the summit of the hill,
 A power was felt that sent it rolling back,
 And downward plunged the unmanageable rock
 Before him to the plain. Again he toiled
 To heave it upward, while the sweat in streams
 Ran down his limbs, and dust begrimed his brow."

It is not needful to follow our Ulysses farther—the Gregory the Great of the Greeks—through these dark and doleful and ghostly regions. We have seen enough to recognize the original purgatory, though it be as simple and bald and barren compared with that of the papist, as is Faust's printing press when compared with Hoe's. Let us leave the region with Ulysses for the upper air.

"Now there flocked
 Already round me, with a mighty noise,
 The innumerable nations of the dead;
 And I grew pale with fear. . . .
 Hastening to my ship, I bade
 The crew embark, and cast the hawsers loose."

And so the first tour of Purgatory, whose record is extant, was made and ended.

The doctrines and teachings of Pythagoras, on the theory of preëxistence and purgatory, had their influence, direct and indirect, on all the religious and philosophical systems immediately surrounding Christianity at its introduction. His long residence in Egypt made him familiar with the theories of that primitive land concerning an anterior existence.

That he afterwards spent some years among the Magi admits of doubts, though Prideaux is very confident: "That Pythagoras was in Egypt, and from thence went to Babylon, and learnt there a great part of that knowledge which he was afterwards so famous for, is agreed by all."*

With a mixture of Egyptian, Indian, and Zoroastrian philosophy, he brought back to Greece, as its leading teacher there, the theory of preëxistence, and an eternal transmigration of the soul from body to body. He even declared that he retained a clear remembrance of that former state through which his soul had come into the present one. His system was pioneer to the Stoic and Platonic, though Plato carried it out more into details, and shows its power in the Christianity of the new Platonists and Schoolmen.†

Plato in his *Phædrus* says that if a soul in the society of the gods delights itself in nectar and ambrosia more than in the contemplation of truth, it grows sluggish and heavy, and falls to the earth, and takes to itself an earthly body, more or less gross, according to its previous grade. In his *Politicus* he advances the idea that after ten thousand years of degradation in the body, then souls will be restored to their primitive state among the celestials. He also quotes, in *Cratylus*, the saying of Orpheus, that "the human soul is here in punishment for sins committed in a preëxistent state." The body is a prison where the

* Connexion, sub anno, 486.

† Morell, *His. Philos. Introd.*, p. 28.

soul is kept in custody till it has suffered sufficiently for its faults.

Empedocles, the Pythagorean, also held, like his Samian master, that souls are here in wandering and exile from God, because they sinned in heaven and were cast out to occupy mortal bodies. And Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris*, makes Heraclitus say, "My soul anticipates her departure from this prison, and beholding, as it were, an outside world through the windows of the body, it seems to recall that region from whence it came down to be enclosed in this mortal body of flesh and bones and blood and nerves."

Plato also, in his *Phædo*, speaking of that home of unfallen souls, says they there breathed light as we do air, and drank a water purer than air. Being now fallen, he says in his *Phædrus*, those least debased and sinful are found in the bodies of philosophers, but the more thoroughly apostate in the bodies of despots and very degraded men.

In his *Phædo* Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates a description of the world of purgation, sufficiently like to be the original of that of the papist. Indeed it will be seen, after reading our summary from Plato, that some of the Roman-catholic authors whom we have quoted are well nigh open to the charge of plagiarism of language as well as ideas.

The interior of the earth, he says, is full of caverns, communicating with each other by underground passages. Among these are hot and cold springs and great rivers. Some of these rivers are of water and

some of fire; some are pure and others dirty and muddy. These all have their confluence into Tartarus, and then flow out of it again in their own channels.

Their influx and efflux is as respiration in the living creature. Among them three are conspicuous. One of these is Acheron, which, flowing under ground for a long distance, enters, at length, the Acherusian Marsh. Here vast multitudes of departed souls are congregated, and having been detained a longer or shorter time, according to their deserts and sentences, they depart to live an earthly life over again in the race of animals.

Another of these rivers is the Phlegethon, or the Burning River. It is a river of many branches, that burst through in different places, wherever they can find or force a way. Its main stream flows into a fiery lake that boils constantly with water and mud; thence, by long compass under ground, it empties itself into the deepest parts of Tartarus. The third river is the Cocytus, the River of Sorrow. This in its course makes first the Stygian lake, the dismal abode of hate and fear and grief. After many additions, in its long and circling wanderings under ground, it also empties itself into Tartarus.

This being the arrangement of the middle regions for the departed, Plato goes on to say, that when spirits arrive, they are first examined, and then sentenced. Those who have lived a life of tolerable uprightness go to the Acherusian Marsh, where they

remain long enough to suffer the punishments appointed for their expiation and expurgation. After their sins are expiated they are absolved and released for happier regions.

If any in sudden passion have done violence to father or mother, or have taken human life in excessive anger, or have committed any other great yet expiable or "venial" sins, and then truly repented during the rest of their lives, they are sent down into the lower abodes of Tartarus. When they have been in its circling and tormenting waters and fires for a twelvemonth, they are thrown into the Acherusian Marsh, where in the mixed assemblage of souls they find those whom they have injured. These they entreat to be content with the sufferings they have endured, and permit them to leave the dismal and sorrowful place. If the prayer is granted, they escape their miseries at once. Otherwise they take the circuit and sufferings of Tartarus again, and again try the clemency of those whom they wronged. And so on and on, and with some for painfully long cycles, till indulgence and absolution are perfected, when they take joyful and returnless departure.

If, however, any are found burdened with very great sins, as unjust homicide or sacrilege, and have exercised no repentance, their sins are unpardonable or "mortal," and under stern decision they are thrust down into the lowest, deepest Tartarus, never to come up and out again.

To this account of the purgatory of the Greeks,

Plato adds, "It is not for a wise man to declare that the description I here furnish of the region and conditions of souls after death is true. But it must be believed that something like this is true concerning them."

In another connection, though in the *Phædo*, he says that souls going to the regions of the dead carry nothing with them but the education, manners and character of this life, and that these predetermine the state there. If the soul be impure from the vices and crimes loved here, good souls will flee from it, and leave it lonely and unguided. So it is necessarily abandoned to wanderings and sorrows that will both punish and purify it. At its appointed time, when its purgation is completed, it escapes.

In his *Republic* Plato unfolds the same theory of purgatory in his story of Erus, a Pamphylian. He was slain in battle, and when about to be buried, on the twelfth day he revived and gave an account of a wonderful tour that he had made through the lower regions. He witnessed the judgment day of the gods, and the division of the multitude of souls as they came in at death. The good were admitted at once to the abodes of the blessed, while the bad were sent downward, doomed to the long and sorrowful wandering of a thousand years. Then there was a regathering of the two divisions, the whole assembly were instructed and exhorted, and each soul was left to its own choice of its future life and state.*

* Plato's *Republic*, Book X.

We have here, from the Grecian system of eschatology, all the elements of the papal purgatory, if we except certain amplified details. Here is the middle region in the earth; the tormenting fire and water; here the multitude of souls, recently from the regions of the living, awaiting their primitive and purgating cycle of suffering; their times are limited by their deserts and by the facility with which pardons may be earned and obtained; here are constant indulgences, absolutions, and departures for the happy land; here are sins "venial" and "mortal" and the hell of the hopeless; and here, in the Pamphylian, the system of tours to and from that doleful region. We need only the thousand years between Plato and Gregory the Great, to perfect, from pagan mythology, the grand papal system of purgatory. It can all be accomplished without aid from the Apocrypha, or the distortion of the canonical Scriptures. The Grecian material is so abundant and apt, and the pagan structure so complete, that originality of thought and plan must be denied to Gregory for the huge imposition.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ROMAN PURGATORY.

WE shall naturally look for the antitype of the Romanist's purgatory in the theology and mythology and under-world of the pagan Romans. Christianity but slowly at first, and only in part finally, supplanted paganism at Rome and in the empire of the Latins.

Singularly and dangerously the apocryphal chair of St. Peter was placed in the beginning at the very gateway of a half-obsolete purgatory, and the jingling of his keys was a sound not unfamiliar on those old hills of the Cæsars. Christianity found that under-world as one discovers an old mine with its shafts and tunnels and chambers and crumbling machinery, and skeletons now and then.

With a church through whose membership there were largely infused pagans Christianized and Christians paganized, how natural and easy to revive and adopt the classic theory of the spirit land, and renew the machinery and working of the inherited mine in those caverns of retribution. Moreover there was at the same time and place, as the popular poem of the age, the *Æneid* of Virgil, the traveller's guide to these lower regions, the hand-book of judgment for the world to come.

As we open this volume here and there, for our

historical purpose, the reader will note that the purgatory of the Romans has not been more enlarged and improved and perfected under nominally Christian hands, than their arts or sciences or agriculture. Indeed the purgatory of Virgil has changed less than his plough under the hand of his improving successors.

Æneas asks permission of the Sibyl to visit his father Anchises in the spirit land.

“One thing I ask of thee. Since here 't is said
The gateway opens to the lower world,
And that dim, shadowy lake, the o'erflowing tide
Of Acheron, that I may, face to face,
Meet my dear father.”

The Sibyl marvels that he should desire to float twice over the Stygian lake, and twice see the gloomy realms of Tartarus, once now alive, and hereafter again when dead. But she grants the request, with the solemn lesson of all religions and ages:

“Easy the way
Down the Avernus; night and the gates
Of Dis stand open. But to retrace thy steps
And reach the upper air, here lies the task,
The difficulty here.”

With rites and sacrifices duly observed, Æneas, under the guide of the Sibyl, seeks the descent to Hades.

“Through shadows, through the lonely night they went,
Through the blank halls and empty realms of Dis.
. Suffering and Death
Inhabit here, and Death's own brother, Sleep;
And the mind's evil Lusts, and deadly War,

Lie at the threshold, and the iron beds
Of the Eumenides ; and Discord wild,
Her viper-locks with bloody fillets bound.

Hence downward leads the way to Tartarus
And Acheron."

By-and-by they come to Cocytus, the horrid stream, and to the Stygian lake, over which Charon, the squalid and grim boatman, is to ferry them and all the dead. Here a strange sight meets our hero.

"Down to the banks
Comes rushing the whole crowd, matrons and men.
Great heroes, boys, unwedded girls, and youths,
Their parents saw stretched on their funeral pile."

Only a part of them the stern ferryman will admit to his boat, because they have not had burial rites.

"No one may pass
Those dreadful waves, until his bones repose
Within a quiet grave. A hundred years
They wander, flitting all around these shores,
Until at last they cross the wished-for lake."

It is with much difficulty that Æneas, because a living man, can be passed over. But the Sibyl is with him, and he bears a golden bough as a charm, and Charon consents and sets them across the lake, and on the confines of the spirit land proper.

"Then, as they entered, voices wild were heard,
Shrieking and wailing—souls of infants robbed
Of all their share of life, snatched from the breast,
And sunk by cruel fate in gloomy death.
Then next were those by accusations false
Condemned to suffer death.
. Next come
The places where the sad and guiltless souls
Were seen, who, hating the warm light of day,
Wrought their own death, and threw away their lives.

How willingly they now, in the upper air,
 Their poverty and sufferings would endure !

Here those whom tyrannous love with cruel blight
 Has wasted, in secluded paths are hid,
 And sheltered round about by myrtle groves,
 Not even in death their cares are left behind."

And so Æneas wanders about in those ghostly realms, meeting now the injured Dido, who justly refuses to speak to him, "with defiance in her mien," and now meeting old and famous Grecian warriors and others.

"To right and left
 The spirits crowd about him, not content
 Merely to see him, but they needs must wait
 And hover round his steps, and know what cause
 Has brought him hither. But the Grecian chiefs
 And hosts of Agamemnon, when they see
 The hero and his glittering arms that flash
 Across the shadows, tremble with great fear.
 Some turn and fly, as to their ships of old
 They fled ; some raise their voices, and their shouts
 Die without sound within their gasping throats."

Farther on our two travellers come to the inner Tartarus, but do not enter, though the Sibyl explains it.

"Groans from within were heard ; the cruel lash,
 The clank of iron, and of dragging chains.
 Here those who cherished hatred during life
 Towards their brothers, or who lifted hands
 Of violence against their parents ; those
 Who 'gainst their clients schemed and practised fraud ;
 Or those who brooded o'er their hoarded wealth,
 Selfish and solitary, nor dispensed
 A portion to their kin—the largest crowd

These formed ; or those who for adulterous crimes
Were slain.

Here one is seen, who for a golden bribe
His country sold, and fixed a despot's throne ;
And for a price made laws, and then unmade.
. All had dared
Some dreadful crime, succeeding where they dared,
Nor if I had a hundred tongues, a voice
Of iron, could I tell thee all the forms
Of guilt, or number all their penalties."

Leaving this region of punishment and agony and
despair on their left, they turn to the Elysian plains,

"The pleasant realms
Of verdant green, the blessed groves of peace.
. Here the bands are seen
Of those who for their country fought and bled ;
The chaste and holy priests ; the reverent bards
Whose words were worthy of Apollo ; those
Who enriched life with fine inventive arts ;
And all who by deserving deeds had made
Their names remembered."

Æneas is now in the department of his venerated
father, Anchises, to meet whom he has taken this
long and perilous under-world tour. On inquiry for
him, they are led to a hilltop whence there is a broad
outlook over the shining fields of the blessed.

"Anchises there,
Down in a valley green, was noting all
The souls shut in, destined one day to pass
Into the upper light.

He, when he saw Æneas, o'er the grass
Coming to meet him, stretched his eager hands,
His cheeks bedewed with tears, and from his lips
These accents fell, 'And art thou come at last ?
That filial love I counted on so long,
Has it now overcome the arduous road ?
My son, is't granted me to see thy face,

And hear thy well-known voice, and answer thee?
Thus in my mind I hoped and guessed, indeed,
And numbered o'er the intervening times,
Nor have my anxious wishes been deceived."

Æneas is greatly moved to see and hear his aged father, and responds,

"Grasp now my hand, my father, grasp my hand
In thine; withdraw not from thy son's embrace!
Thrice round his neck he strove to throw his arm
And thrice the shadow flitted from his grasp,
And vanished like a wingéd dream away."

While Æneas and Anchises are conversing and strolling they come to the river Lethe, and see an innumerable number of souls about its banks. Æneas inquires who they are and what their future may be, and is informed that they are destined for other bodies, are in a transition state, and by-and-by will appear among mortals again. This is a great surprise to Æneas.

"O father, can we think that from this place
Any exalted souls to upper skies
Return to enter sluggish frames again?
Why so intensely do these hapless ones
Long for the light?"

These questions lead Anchises to explain the origin of the soul and its entrance into bodies of different grades, human and animal. By these it is more or less tainted.

"Nor e'en when life's last ray
Has fled, does every ill depart, nor all
Corporeal taints quite leave their unhappy frames,
And needs must be that many a hardened fault
Inheres in wondrous ways. Therefore the pains
Of punishment they undergo for sins

Of former times. Some in the winds are hung,
Suspended and exposed. Others beneath
A waste of waters from their guilt are cleansed,
Or purified by fire. We all endure
Our ghostly retribution. Thence a few
Attain the free Elysium's happy fields,
Till Time's great cycle of long years complete,
Clears the fixed taint, and leaves the ethereal sense
Pure, a bright flame of unmixed heavenly air.
All these, when for a thousand years the wheel
Of fate has turned, the Deity calls forth
To Lethe's stream, a mighty multitude ;
That they, forgetful of the past, may see
Once more the vaulted sky, and may begin
To wish return into corporeal frames.'

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Anchises, having thus addressed his son,
Together with the Sibyl, leads them on,
And through the ivory gate dismisses them.
Back to his ships the chief pursues his way;
Again beholds his comrades; then sets sail
Towards Caieta's port. The anchors now
Hang from the prows; the sterns stand on the beach."

How very like all this to the authors and purgatorial itineraries of the tenth, fifteenth, and even nineteenth centuries! With a few changes from classic to saintly names, one could be easily pardoned the mistake in supposing he was reading a papal instead of pagan Roman poet. For there is more than parallelism and suggested likeness; there is approximate identity of idea and theory, and method and results. Further historical developments will show parental relations between the old pagan and the coming papal purgatory.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GNOSTIC PRESSURE ON THE CHURCH.

IN the growth of philosophical thought, which in ruder ages runs naturally and mostly on the spiritual or religious line, the Zoroastrian system, at the advent of Christianity and before, showed such decadence as always suggests death or renovation. As the two systems of Zoroaster and of Christ, therefore, met on common ground, there were naturally some mutual tendencies to affiliate, as also rivalries to supplant. Hence two schools or systems of philosophical religion arose, the Gnostic and the Manichæan, the former being the elder. As to times and places, it is sufficient for our purpose to say, generally, that Gnosticism flourished in all Christian communities in the second century, showed weakness in the third and prostration in the fourth, and disappeared, as a system or sect, in the sixth. The system itself was eclectic, and of three parts mainly : the old Parsism of Zoroaster, Platonic philosophy, and Jewish theology ; and the system had its sects as these elements were combined in different proportions, or as some minor one came in with a local prominence. It was more intellectual than spiritual, and more speculative than practical.

The Pârsî and the Greek systems have been given

in outline, and the Jewish may be here briefly stated, so far as our question of eschatology is concerned.

The doctrine of preëxistence was no tenet foreign to apocryphal Judaism when the pure form of that revealed religion was supplanted by the Christian. In the Book of Wisdom, Solomon is represented as saying, "I was a witty child, and had a good spirit; yea, rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled."* Here Solomon is made to teach that he received in this life a body of peculiar excellence, because in a preëxistent state he had been peculiarly good.†

The Essenes held this doctrine in very distinct outline. Josephus says that according to this sect, souls come out of the most subtile air and of a celestial origin, and enter mortal bodies as prison-houses. Some natural enticement attracts them to these bodies, where they remain for a time enforced, as in some loathsome dungeon. When released from this by death, they depart, as from a prison, to a life immortal, yet of a grade befitting their moral character. As to that future, Josephus says their opinion coincides with that of the Greeks, who send their brave and good at death to the islands of the blessed, while they allot to bad souls dark and tempestuous regions full of punishments.‡

* Wisdom, VIII. pp. 19, 20.

† The Douay and the Septuagint add clearness to the idea: "I was a witty child, and had received a good soul. And whereas I was more good, I came to a body undefiled." *Παῖς δὲ ἤμην εὐφροῆς, ψυχῆς τε ἔλαχον αγαθῆς. Μαλλον δε αγαθος ὦν ἦλθον εἰς σῶμα ἀμίαντον.*

‡ Josephus, De Bell. Jud., B. II. Ch. VIII. § 11. Neander, I. p. 47. Mosh. Com., I. p. 69.

In the book of Maccabees we are informed that after a battle in which many Jews were slain, Judas, making a collection, "sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice, to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously of the resurrection ; for if he had not hoped that they that were slain would rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead, and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."*

The apocryphal character of this authority does not affect the strength of the quotation for our use, since it is conceded that the book of Maccabees was written not later than A. D. 70, and possibly as early as B. C. 124. The quotation is proof, therefore, that the theory of a purgatory, and the utility of prayers for the dead therein, were ideas prevalent with some of the Jews at that writing.

It is, however, unfortunate for the papist that this passage is found in an apocryphal Scripture, since it is their usual proof-text for prayers for the dead, and the only one they cite that has pertinency or force.

The Gnostic School had its sects, as these three, the Pârsî, the Greek, and the Judaic, combined in different proportions, or as some minor one came in with a local prominence. It was more intellectual than spiritual, and more speculative than practical, as the

* 2 Macc. 2:43-46. Douay Trans.

name of its advocates shows—the Gnostics, the knowing ones. Some of these Gnostics recognized a kind of authority in the Old Testament, and so affiliated with the Jews, and introduced Parsism and Platonism into the Jewish theological schools in Syria and at Alexandria. Others held the New Testament in great respect, and as eclectics had affinity for its intellectual and theoretic qualities, and so became Christians in a sense, and came within the church; for many early Christian teachers were more zealous than discriminating in their preaching, and garnered much unsifted wheat. The Christian doctrine was favorably met by a high intellectual interest on the part of the Gnostics, and in their ambition to gain truth they adopted the Christian scheme, but with an indifference to the spiritual import and practical uses of it. And Neander says they “were not at all disposed to separate themselves from the rest of the church and establish distinct communities of their own.”* Yet of their relative force Guericke says “it is rare to find that the Gnostic club is superior in numbers and strength to the local church.”†

Of Gnosticism, then, we note three things for those earlier centuries of Christianity: it was in the church; it embraced the intellectual and speculative and philosophical class in the church; and it was coëxtensive with it. The latter fact is significant, since, besides its European and African conquests, Christianity had,

* Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, I. p. 389.

† *Ancient Church*, Shedd's Trans, p. 164.

by the middle of the second century, planted itself in Media, Persia, Parthia, and Bactria, and in the third century in Armenia. When we consider how much Gnosticism had borrowed from Zoroaster and Plato, and how mythological and pagan its eschatology was, we may presume that it was making a severe and dangerous pressure on the juvenile church and on a simple, spiritual, and practical gospel. Gnosticism pretended to scholarship and philosophy and originality. Such pretentious claims in the pulpit have usually gained an unwise admiration, a barren church, and a deteriorated creed. It was painfully so in the present instance, as was illustrated in Rome herself. For in that germinant centre of the coming papacy the central force of Gnosticism carried sway by its scholarly bearing. "The Valentinians, the most influential and important division of the Gnostics, continued to exist, under various modifications of their system, till into the fourth century, and later; their principal seat being the city of Rome."*

In this infusion of Gnosticism into Christianity there came, as essential parts of it, the notions of pre-existence and a future purgatorial state. For proof of this we will cite a few illustrative and influential cases from among the Gnostic Christian teachers.

Basilides, who stood prominent in the church in the first half of the second century, had had previous culture in the Judæan and Egyptian schools. He taught that the soul, having sinned in a former life,

* Guericke, Shedd's Translation, p. 171.

was sent hither for punishment and purification. If it failed of a perfect recovery here, it was doomed at death to enter another body, human or brutal, for another experiment and struggle for restoration. This was his idea of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." And on the same theory of serial existences he explained the words of St. Paul, "I was alive without the law once," in a former state of existence, before the law was given. Basilides had a deep and painful consciousness of this inherited corruption, and great humility under it, with a devout and intense longing for freedom from it. With this tone of piety, his teaching had all the more weight in carrying his errors into the young and uneducated church of Christ.*

Carpocrates was a Gnostic and Christian philosopher of Alexandria, and flourished in the first half of the second century. In his theology he was semi-pagan. On the doctrine of preëxistence he drew largely from the *Phædrus* of Plato. He taught that souls which properly remember their former and better state, with earnest struggles to regain it, will succeed, though only by painful labors. Others, less active, will fail, and so fall back into second bodies for another trial.

Valentine, another Gnostic, led large parties in the Eastern and Western Churches, about the middle of the second century. He held that souls had their

* Mosheim's Commentary, I. pp. 416-427. Neander, I. pp. 404-417.

beginning in the third heavens, where they were divine and pure. But under transgression they were driven out to take on themselves earthly bodies—the “coats of skins” that God gave to our sinning parents. After a sufficient number of purifying changes and much redemptive suffering they will be restored to their celestial estate and abode.

Justin Martyr, of Grecian and pagan parentage, in the first half of the second century had for teachers Stoic, Pythagorean, and Platonic, and came under the Great Teacher when about twenty-three years of age. He is the first scholar and doctor in the church who puts the Platonic theories into the gospel, and at the same time under its modifying power. He speaks of the soul as appearing more than once in human embodiment; and if, when about to depart in death, it is not fit for heaven, it assumes some animal form, and so passes onward and upward by a degrading and purifying process.

Origen, who took the martyr's crown practically under his persecutions, though not really, A. D. 254, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, was the first scholar of his times, and had much power in shaping the theology of the church.* He believed and taught that human souls lived, sinned, and fell in a preëxistent state, and were sent hither in punishment. Indeed, the world was created specially as their prison-house,

* “The Adamantine Origen, the Living Personification of Oriental Learning, Eagerness, and Speculation.” Prof. H. B. Smith, D. D. Address for the Promotion of Education. 1857.

and human bodies were created for them, that they might here go through a punitive and purifying dispensation. Modifying while adopting the ideas of his Egyptian and Platonic teachers, he taught that many material worlds had existed and perished, and that many others will yet come and go, as abodes for the punishment and restoration of revolted souls. When their redemption is complete, the last material world will be destroyed, as the stagings and scaffoldings are all taken down when the building is complete.*

In concluding this collection of historical rays of light on the Gnostic purgatory as the preface to the Roman, it may serve well our purpose to quote one scholar and author who stood openly on the pagan side of a rather obscure line.

Hierocles, not the governor of Alexandria in the fourth century, who persecuted the Christians with pen and sword, but Hierocles, the new Platonist, who flourished at Alexandria in the fifth century, speaks quite definitely of the nature and design of the purgatorial sufferings in his Commentary on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras: "The judges of the infernal regions correct and cure the soul by prescribing punishments for the health of nature, just as physicians heal the most inveterate ulcers by incisions. They punish the crime in order to extirpate it. They do not annihilate the essence of the soul, but bring it

* Mosheim's Commentary, II. pp. 150-153; Neander, I. pp. 624-627; *Biblica Sacra*, XII. pp. 161-165.

back to its true existence by purifying it from all the passions that corrupt it.”*

But it is not necessary to proceed farther in showing that the pagan theories of preëxistence infected largely the prominent teachers of the church in the early centuries. The bold outburst of Jerome may be taken as a synopsis of many pages that could be here added: “This impious and wicked doctrine was anciently diffused through Egypt and the East, and now prevails in secret, as in vipers’ nests, among most, and pollutes the purity of those regions; and as by an hereditary disease, glides in the few to pervade the many.”

Of this doctrine, the doctrine of a second probation would be an inevitable if not logical sequence, and, as a matter of fact, it did come in as actual and practical.

Gregory the Great, sometimes called the first pope, born about A. D. 544, and dying A. D. 604, organized and matured the purgatorial system that we have under consideration. How near to his day and chair the philosophic and mystic elements of the Oriental purgatory may have been brought by these Gnostic scholars is now obvious. Those were not our hasty, telegraphic days, when a new German theory is obsolescent in ten years and fossil antique in twenty-five. For practical effect, systems two centuries apart were well nigh as contemporaneous then as those of two decades are to-day.

* The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion. By the Chevalier Ramsay. Vol. II. p. 363. Glasgow, 1749.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE MANICHÆAN PRESSURE ON THE CHURCH.

As Gnosticism was disappearing, a new, more scholarly, insinuating, and dangerous enemy to Christianity came slowly to view in Manichæism. It differed from the former mainly in seeming to come nearer to Christianity, and in simulating it by adopting, in symbol, its theories and aims and terms. Mani himself, of Persian origin, was a Pârsî and a Christian, but which first is not agreed. He was a pervert from one, but not a total convert to the other, and his system was therefore a hybrid. Neander calls it "the Buddhaist-Zoroastrian-Christian system;" "a strange compound," says Mosheim, "of the ancient Persian philosophy and Christianity." The Manichæans "transmute Christianity into a Persian philosophy and theosophy. Of all the Christian heretical sects, the Manichæans certainly are least deserving of the epithet Christian; for Manichæism is at bottom a purely heathen scheme, invested in a symbolical drapery borrowed from Christianity. Yet there is sufficient of this drapery to justify its being treated as a sect having connections with Christianity, and running parallel with Gnosticism."*

Of the Bible they received as authority only parts of

* Guericke, Shedd's Trans., p. 185.

the New Testament. Yet they applied to these parts so destructive a criticism, to separate the genuine from the corrupt, and such an interpretation of it and enforced discovery of symbols, to make all correspond with the doctrines of Mani, that no Scripture was left, as divine and authoritative. They so used Christian titles and names and phrases as to give an appearance of a Christian sect. "Agapius, a shrewd and crafty Manichæan, for the sake of concealment used the common words and phrases of Christians, but affixed to them meanings accordant with the opinions of his master."* This was a common practice with the learned disciples of Mani. One person, in their theology, they called Christ, and another the Holy Ghost; and they spoke of the advent and crucifixion of Christ, and of the salvation of men by him as the only Saviour. They urged repentance, observed the Sabbath, and celebrated the sacrament of the Supper in their way. Mani opens his *Epistola Fundamenti*, their Bible in reality, with the words, "Mani, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the election of God the Father;" yet the later Manichæans taught that Mani, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, and the Sun, are one and the same person.

It was in the latter half of the third century that Mani originated and introduced this system. The Magi were laboring to restore the waning school of Zoroaster, when Mani discovered that certain fundamental elements in Christianity, as a redemptive

* Mosheim's Commentary, II. p. 374

system, could be forced to combine, in appearance, with Parsism. He set himself, therefore, to infuse the young blood of the new religion into the enfeebled body of the old Pârsî system. It was a bold attempt to work over the religions of old Asia, and the now wide-spreading Christianity, into a new spiritual philosophy and popular religious creed. In the combination the teachings of Christ must be accommodated to those of Zoroaster. The aim was openly declared, and the end publicly contested, and so widely carried that at the close of the third century this sect had become prominent in the East, and in Northern Africa, and in Europe to the limits of the Roman Empire.

It will be necessary to our purpose to outline this system only far enough to show its eschatology, and the relations of that part of it to our general topic.

Mani held the theory of two kingdoms, good and evil, and that they are co-eternal, co-extensive, and co-potent. Light and darkness represent these powers or parties, as persons called God and the Demon. Far back in the ages the two parties mixed in struggle, spiritual and physical, and the demon so far succeeded that a third realm resulted. Itself was spiritual and material, composed of the mixed good and evil of the two parties. This third realm consisted of earthy matter, which is of the demon and wholly evil, in this instance and universally, and of a portion of the celestial elements, and of the divine and animated light, the inorganic material of which rational souls could be made. In the struggle the demon and his leaders

had also absorbed or devoured a large number of celestial souls, and they became changed in their nature, and assimilated to the powers of darkness.

The kingdom of light now moved another campaign on the kingdom of darkness to recover the souls and the particles of celestial light, held in bondage in that third realm. To prevent the recapture the Demon secured as many births as would embody all those souls and utilize all those particles of light, and then devoured all this new progeny. Thus he absorbed into himself the spiritual treasures plundered from the celestial kingdom, and afterward procreated Adam, the first man, and conveyed to him the same. So those souls and particles of divine light, stolen and debased, were thought to be safe from recovery, as being forced into the soul of Adam, in whom the whole future race of mortals was now compacted. Then they were made ready for propagation by the generation of Eve, and so the suffering and sinful race of mortals began. The body of each is of depraved matter, wholly hostile to God. In each there are two souls, one rational, made of one of those celestial souls and particles of celestial light, and the other an offspring of the Demon and fully his child in character. After Adam was thus procreated by the Demon, and all these stolen souls and particles of celestial light had been consolidated into his one soul, it was the purpose of God to prevent the extension of the kingdom of darkness by compelling Adam to a bachelor life. The Demon, however, having an eye to his own future

and populous kingdom, generated Eve, and with only a base and evil soul, since her father had imparted all celestial souls and light to Adam. As Eve had only the baser soul of the Demon, passion ruled, and the human race began; and that was the fall of Adam. In the propagation of the race, body generates body, and soul generates soul. So each child of Adam is threefold, having a body wholly evil, one soul wholly evil, and one soul wholly good. The origin of the human race, therefore, is not of God, but of the Demon, and our heavenly part is stolen material from the kingdom of light. It then became the divine problem to recover, separate, purify and take back again what the Prince of darkness had captured.

God therefore constructed the universe, the earth and the heavenly bodies surrounding as a domicile where he could handle the coming human race and work out their salvation. Of material perfectly pure he first made the sun and moon, of pure fire and light the sun, and of pure water the moon; and of what was slightly contaminated he next made the stars, and the ether in which they are set; and finally, of gross matter totally corrupted and depraved, he made the earth. This took place after the procreation of Adam and Eve by the Prince of darkness, but before the generation of their race. To keep the coming race as free as possible from Satanic interference, the princes of evil were confined in the stars, yet could throw malign influences more or less on the earth. To them the Manichæan system attributes tempests,

thunder storms, pestilences, droughts and other blights, and many personal and private evils. The Prince of darkness, in his rage, drops bile on the earth, whence come the grapevine and wine. These are born under an "evil star," and so foredoomed.

The Son of God and many celestial beings fixed their residence in the sun and moon. In making the world, masses of totally bad fire, water, air, and wind were walled out, to be let in when the time comes for the absolute destruction of our earth. This universe was thought to be a most cumbrous affair and in danger of falling apart, and so was braced up by two giants. When they weary and tremble we have earthquakes, and at times God sends down his Son to strengthen them, and then it is that he "preaches to the spirits in prison."

The world being thus prepared, as a stage for action, and the human race coming on it, God wrought variously for their recovery. He sent his Son, who feigned a body, and taught the Jews a way of escape, and confirmed his teachings by miracles. The Prince of evil feared the results, and moved the Jews to put him to death. Christ seemed to suffer and to be crucified, and so by example taught that the escape of a soul is by sorrow and torture. Christ did not reveal fully the plan of salvation, but promised the Paraclete, who came in the person of Mani and completed the revelation. Of the causes of the advent of Christ and of his teachings, sufferings, and death, the Manichæan so spoke, and in such Scriptural and Christian phrases,

that the uncritical would note little if any difference between them and Christians. The sufferings of Christ were not vicarious, but only exemplary. For these souls were perfect and could not sin, or need repentance or atonement. They were only unfortunate captives imprisoned in a vile body, and he taught them by example that to escape they must deny, macerate, and torture that body as he had done.

The souls that received Christ as the Son of God and their Saviour, and struggled for obedience to him, forsaking the Prince and works of darkness, slowly made escape from their corruptions and thralldom. In this they were much aided by the Holy Spirit. Repentance was urged, meaning thereby sorrow for yielding to the low instincts of their second soul; for the divine soul could not sin, being simply a particle of the perfect God.

No soul is perfectly pure, when at death it leaves this dark and corrupt body, and much painful purgation yet remains. When liberated by death from the body, souls are quite luminous, and pass by way of the twelve constellations to the moon. Their shining, radiant character it is that imparts the brightness and glow to the zodiac. Their first station is the moon. This is an ocean of pure water, and the abode of celestial spirits, and well adapted to wash away all external or tangible stains that may attach to them. For fifteen days they swim and bathe and are washed in these celestial waters. In so long time the moon becomes filled with well-washed ones, and then empties

them into the sun. So do souls, those particles of light, swell that ocean orb with brightness, and it becomes a full moon of souls. In the pale, lean emptiness of her first quarter she is commencing another monthly deportation of immortals in their weary and painful progress of purgation. The sun receives them from the moon. The sun is a divine mass of the purest fire, the abode of Christ and of many celestial beings. All stain, filth of soul, or moral taint of any kind, is intolerable and impossible here, and so the newly-arrived enter on the severest purification, as ore in the crucible. This continues without specified or tabled time, but the end is perfection, as absolute as divinity, when the souls pass on to their native country, the world of ineffable and eternal light. First washed, and then roasted and burned into purity, their purgatory is ended. It is the more tolerable since Christ and the angelic have home in the moon and sun, and furnish blessed society and special aids to those in purification. As Christ assists them in all the sorrowful stages, he is their Saviour. The sufferings of this class are not punitive, for they are not sinners, but remedial for them as unfortunates. Pain comes on them as on patients in the hospital under surgery.

In the spirit world Manichæism has three classes of souls: the perfect, whom we have now considered; the totally wicked; and a medium class. This medium class consists of those who may have known their duty but imperfectly, or attended to it carelessly, or who may have been negligent of the means of purification

while in the body. A second probation is assigned to these by another worldly life in some animal, tree, plant, or herb; for this system of Mani fills all nature, animate and inanimate, with souls. This second life in a body is graded of God to the demerits of the person. In cases of the most worthy, souls are so embodied that the next death passes them on at once to the world of light by the moon and sun. There is, moreover, a poetic justice shown in the kind of punishment. If one killed a sacred animal, his next and purgatorial life would be in that animal; the dying miser is passed over to become a tramp and a beggar; he of the lordly mansion would be as a poor tenant, changing his room monthly; the homicide would be doomed to a leprous body, and so on in endless variations and adaptations. The reader will readily recall the same theory and practice, as we have delineated it, under the papal system. The Manichæan and Papal pictures could not be much nearer alike, if electrotyped from the same original. Yet these purgatorial visitations of Mani in other bodies were paternal and salutary rather than judicial and punitive.

The third class were those who sinned enormously, despised God, added malignity to the neglect of duty, and were totally negligent of their purification. These were assigned to the Manichæan hell. This is a place made up of masses of evil fire, remnants of the vanquished realm of darkness, where the Demon and his princes bear rule. Here they suffer all that fiend and fire can inflict; yet while the tortures seem to come

only from a Satanic joy in tormenting, the process is restorative, the corrupt is agonized out of them, and they finally follow those who, earlier and more devout, have passed into eternal light.

The coincidence is so striking between the Papal and the Manichæan policy in one point, that we note it here in its separateness. Manichæans who died without penitence or formal confession of their sins, were committed at once to this realm of anguish. The papist has the same doom for the same neglect, and from that doom confession and absolution saved equally the Manichæan and the Romanist. Of the Romanist dying unconfessed and unabsolved, it may be said, as it was said of the Manichæan who died impenitent, "Non punitur quia peccavit, sed quia de peccato non doluit."

We have now, by condensed statement and authoritative quotations, shown the Manichæan system in the matter of the sinful dead, and of their purgation after death into a state of perfect blessedness. How far it served to foreshadow, preface, and found the following purgatorial system of Romanism is a matter for just judgment from an historical and theological basis as now given. It remains only to add a few considerations that are indispensable to the formation of this just judgment.

It was no purpose of the Gnostics to supplant or even reconstruct the Christian Church. They wished only to infuse Gnosticism into the church, and this not by new creeds or forms, but by new interpretations and

uses of the old, with such inner, second, and spiritual senses as only those of the higher spiritual life could receive. It was quite otherwise with Mani. He declared himself as commissioned of God to reform radically and quite extensively the church. Judaism he regarded as of the Demon, and, so far as it stood connected with Christianity, only a source of corruption. Hence the church was exceedingly degenerated; and as he understood his divine mission, so he declared openly his purpose to modify and adjust Christianity to his system and found one true and mostly new church. On this plan, open and bold, he and his followers struck out into the fields that the religion of Christ had begun to occupy, and started their churches, with their bishops and presbyters and deacons. In Bulgaria and Slavonia they had even their separate pontiff, and as late as the fifteenth century. Of course with the unthinking masses this verisimilitude, this counterfeit of Christianity, had great power.

The extent to which Manichæism prevailed, and the general growth of the system, is a point worthy of careful thought. How broad an impress, and how firm a hold this system had on Christianity, may be judged from the words of Mosheim: "Although the greatest and wisest men withstood it, both in oral discussions and in books, yet they could not prevent its spreading with surprising rapidity almost throughout Christendom, and captivating a vast number of persons of moderate talents and judgment."*

* Mos. Com., II. p. 251.

Mani died in or about 278 A. D. At that time his system prevailed in Media, Persia, Parthia, Bactria, Northern Africa, and in the European portions of the Roman Empire. It will be noticed that the founder, during his life, had thus pressed his purpose to supplant Christianity, and had kept pace with its growth in most of the regions where the early Christians had planted it. In the following or fourth century "the Manichæan sect beyond others, and by its very turpitude, ensnared many, and often persons of good talents also, as appears by the example of Augustine. This widespread pestilence the most respectable doctors of the age, and among them Augustine, when recovered from his infatuation, made efforts to arrest, some indeed with more learning and discrimination, and others with less, but none of them without some success. But the disease could not be wholly extirpated either by books or severe laws, but after remaining latent for a time, and when most people supposed it extinct, it would break out again with fresh violence; for the Manichæans, to avoid the severity of the laws, assumed successively various names, and under these names they often lay concealed for a time."*

In the fifth century Manichæism produced a numerous progeny under these assumed names, various and convenient; and their boldness and success in the sixth century are seen in the fact that they made a convert of the son of the Persian monarch. This,

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., Murdock's Trans., I. p. 282.

however, was avenged by a fearful persecution and slaughter. The persecution of the followers of Mani began as early as the reign of Valentinian I., who came to the throne 364 A. D. Of course it only increased their fanaticism, while they made the point, so popular and effective, that they were poor, persecuted Christians. This greatly multiplied them.

In the following century the Greek Empire and Church came into civil conflict with these heretics, under the name of Paulicians, in Armenia and provinces adjoining; and in this and the eighth century the disciples of Mani, under one name and another, increased much their strength through the whole East. This entire century was lighted up by the persecuting fires of the Greek Church against the Paulicians, and the fierce struggle was protracted past the middle of the ninth by Theodora, the Greek Empress, who decreed that the sect should be won back to the Greek Church, or be exterminated by fire and sword. About one hundred thousand Manichæans thus perished in Armenia alone, where the Pârsî ancestors of this religion had laid its foundation a thousand years before. In the eighth century Constantine V. had removed a large body of this people to Thrace, that the East might not be so vexed with them. Yet in the tenth century they were still so abundant and powerful in Syria and the adjoining regions, that the bishop of Antioch, Theodorus, secured the deportation of another large colony to Thrace. Thence they migrated, carrying their doctrines as household gods to Bulgaria,

Slavonia, Italy, and Southern Europe generally. This relief of the Greek Church was to the annoyance and corruption of the Roman, and the papal pontiffs were thus put to great trouble.

In the next century, the eleventh, the Greek Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, seeing that persecution worked to their increase, tried argument in public discussions at Philippopolis, after which the converts were rewarded with honors, gifts of lands and houses, and other rich presents, and the obstinate were compelled to perpetual imprisonment. Then and afterwards they wandered off as apostles of their faith into Lombardy and Insubria, and made Milan strong headquarters, reaching out into France and Germany in their following of Christian footsteps.

It is needless to follow these Manichæans farther into the dark ages under their various names. In their titles as heretics there were many changes, but in their tenets great constancy. The whole monkish system, which has had so much to do in the construction of the papal theology, is a Manichæan child. With Mani matter is of the devil, and wholly evil, and our bodies are the product of the Demon, as the prisons of divine souls. Hence the struggle of the Christian life should be to abuse, abase, mutilate, and macerate the body, and bring it under, that the prison may be broken down and the prisoner go free. Hence monks and hermits, herb diet, pebbled shoes, hair shirts, spiked bedsteads, and all those saintly and nameless inventions to agonize human flesh.

We here close our survey of the ancient religions, preceding the Christian, on the point of eschatology, and turn our closing thoughts towards their formative and reconstructive influences on the system of One who spoke as "having authority" when He "brought life and immortality to light."

CHAPTER XXII.

RETROSPECT AND SUMMARY.

EVIDENTLY the young Christian creed and church stand in an exposed foreground; for in the background, though in a sense dim with age and distance, were the Egyptian and Hindoo systems of future restoration as we have unfolded them. They were far from extinct systems, and not lacking in such scholarship as those times produced, while their devout followers embraced the dense masses of Northern Africa and Western and Southern Asia. And what of limited death these systems may have suffered had been more than replaced by the vital forces of the creed of Zoroaster. His purgatory was theirs, revised and adapted to newer ages and stages of philosophical and religious thought; and it held sway inclusive from the mouth of the Indus up and around by the Aral, Caspian, and Black Seas, along the Mediterranean from Constantinople to the Nile and upward, and thence by the Arabian Sea to the Indus again. In all the wide realms thus included purgatorial fires had been lighted by the priesthood, and the people were forecasting the spirit land with vivid and painful distinctness.

From the sixth century before Christ to the seventh in the Christian era, when Romanism had adopt-

ed purgatory as an organized power, this area was the thought-field of the world, where latent and germinant and systematizing religious ideas were in preparation to recast the coming Christian system. Over such a range of country and through so long a range of centuries was this pressure maturing, and approaching like a glacial progress across a continent. When we consider the character of this system of Zoroaster, it will not surprise us that it had such a moulding and modifying influence on the Christian creed.*

With all this theory of Zoroaster, Grecian and Roman eschatology, on the punitive and remedial side, was in substantial accord. "Through the great Aryan religious systems, Brahminism, Zarthustrism, Buddhism, and onward into the range of Islam and of Christianity, subterranean hells of purgatory or punishment made the doleful contrast to heavens of light and glory."†

The popular presentations of purgatory, as set forth by Homer and Virgil, were but local openings or sectional views of that universal under-world which extended from the Indus, past the Nile, to the German Ocean. The Grecian and Roman theories are important in our consideration of this topic, not only as well

* "Of all the religions of Indo European origin, of all the religions of the ancient Gentile world, it may fairly claim to have been the most noble and worthy of admiration for the depth of its philosophy, the spirituality of its views and doctrines, and the purity of its morality." *The Avesta*, etc. By Wm. D. Whitney. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, V. p. 378.

† *Primitive Culture*. By Edward B. Taylor. P. 68. Henry Holt & Co.: New York, 1874.

outlined and powerful, but as then embedded in the popular letters of the world and in the hand-books of those very regions where Christianity was to make its first popular conquests and organize itself. The thinking world, as it was then bounded and known by its writers and lecturers, its philosophers and poets, was permeated by these theories and visions and itineraries of the spirit land.

Nearer still to the Christians, among them, and more or less of them, were the Gnostics and the Manichæans. They were Romans and Greeks, Pârsî, Brahmins, and Egyptians, reëdited, if we may so say, with interlinear commentary and foot-notes. They had but little that was radically new, only those natural increments or growths of thought that the ages add inevitably to human systems. Their structures were, substantially, old bricks in new mortar.

The religious world was "without form and void, and darkness was upon the face" of it. There was painful need that it be said authoritatively, "Let there be light." Human philosophies and hopes and uncertainties and anxieties held our race in drift and commotion as to the after world. Evidently with great peril to itself, and only in a divine impulse and boldness, the Christian system came to the front, saying, "On earth, peace." The attendant dangers were manifold and enveloping. They lay in a "series of phenomena peculiar to this period, originating in the vast interchange among nations which this age witnessed, the contact of the East with the West, and

the intermingling of the Eastern and Western spirit—such a series of events as occurs in history only at rare intervals.”*

This emigration of ideas multitudinous from the old Asiatic East, overrunning Southern and Western Europe, finds no better parallel or illustration than in those great tidal waves of the Aryan people with which Asia flooded Europe in prehistoric times. Those Aryans, of whom there are said to have been three distinct migrations westward in vast bodies, reconstructed radically the civil and social status of Europe, and furnish really the first authentic chapter in European history. For they dashed and broke up as waves on the natural boundaries between the two continents, and so planted out the several races and nations of historic Europe.

Much after this manner those old religions of Asia and of Egypt, reconstructed and reappearing in various forms, moved westward on the fields that youthful Christianity was beginning to occupy, and mingled their human notions with divine certainties. These old tides of religious creed met the young and swelling Christian tide. Meanwhile the Church of God, unanchored in the Word of God, afloat on philosophy and policy, and sailed by a human compass on a human chart, was caught, like St. Paul's ship in Adria, “where two seas met.”

It is not, therefore, so wonderful as it is painful that a pagan and classic purgatory crowded itself into

* Neander, *Church History*, I. p. 365.

the young and rival religion. Far less spiritual than it might have been, courting popularity and ambitious of power, Christianity bid for hereditary places of honor by compromises with the ancient religions. With the Scriptures sparsely diffused, and in the fragmentary manuscripts of their different authors, the text-books of the older world and their honored and august teachers were able to gain a front rank over the Word of God, and dictate creeds to the Christian fathers at the doors of the church.

Hence the doctrine of purgatory is an inherited dogma from the pagan world, and forced into the papal Church in those days of juvenile weakness. The historical gleanings here made leave no doubt over this statement. While Gregory felt the pressure of this doctrine on the church from without, he no doubt foresaw its power as an element of government within the church. That power remains to-day, amplified, systematized, and consolidated, and, when necessary, concentrated on the individual church member. It pervades the entire literature of Romanism, from the alphabetical catechism to the creed of the Council of Trent. It is the one all-pervading and inexorable power in her discipline; and as the inculcation of it is begun in infancy, and never remitted in the progress of years, it is inwrought into the very framework of beliefs and mental furniture. Hence, with the commonalty of the Romish communion, Protestant argument is like an attack on axioms; and hence, too, the rarity of conversions from that faith

as compared with labor expended. We dip at the reservoir to exhaust it of deadly waters, while they control all the head-springs that fill it.

Therefore, in dealing with Romanism, an additional policy may be needed and serviceable. If a deep and tender sympathy were shown to the masses in that communion, and the unscriptural, unscientific, and the pagano-historic character of this central doctrine were candidly and kindly made known, a Christian advance could be started all round. Allowance must be made for not only great but honest errors in papal faith and life, and approaches for improvement should be made to the body of that church as to sincere and candid people. Instead of denouncing darkness, it was divine wisdom and kindness to say, "Let there be light." If there has not been in this treatise an entire misapprehension of this doctrine of Purgatory and of its uses, it is the central power in the administration of the Roman-catholic Church. Therefore the enlightenment, improvement, and increased usefulness of that body, and its adaptation to the advanced condition of the nineteenth century, must begin in that doctrine. "And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

HERE we close this historical disquisition on the cardinal doctrine of power in the Roman-catholic Church. In an authoritative statement of the doctrine and its uses we have used the most popular and accredited text-books and treatises of that branch of the church. If there has been any failure in fairness or candor or fulness in this statement, it has not been consciously so, and will be recognized with regret. It has been no purpose of the author to treat the subject argumentatively or controversially; and if any quoted statements of the doctrine, or cases cited illustrative of its use, beget a controversial spirit in the mind of the reader, this must be credited to the quotations themselves, and not to the intention of their collector.

As to the origin of the embodied ideas that constitute this doctrine of purgatory, the field is a fair one for historical antiquaries. The genealogy of a theory, the pedigree of a notion, the genetic exposition of a theological dogma, may lead one back over curious and rare traits of human thought, and in the end may prove as humiliating as when one traces back his family genealogy too far. Pedigree, the stairway of the fathers, whether of families or of notions, is nothing very brilliant or honorable, often, in its lower steps.

If, therefore, we have gone from the Tiber to the Indus, and from the Indus to the Nile, in running back the ancestry of this doctrine of Christian Rome, and have found it well developed and energetically enforced before an Old Testament made the record that "Terah begat Abram," we should not be regarded as assaulting a popular and modern church doctrine. We are simply led, historically, to show it to be venerable and hoary with antiquity. History is not polemic, and never makes assault on posterity.

The Protestant faith concerning the condition of souls after death is nothing earlier or later or wiser than the revealed will and word of God. This closeness of limits shuts one off from speculative philosophy, and theories of divine government, and sympathetic possibilities, and from premature endeavors to vindicate the ways of God. Assuming that nothing is known of the condition of the dead except what is revealed, both query and faith on the subject are closely shut up within the limits of Scriptural interpretation.

Every one is credited at birth, by the Scriptures, with the gift of endless being. To be, or not to be, at any possible time in the indefinite future, is a question foreclosed by simply beginning to be. The obvious Scripture gives no encouragement to moot that question of terminable existence, either by exhaustion or by annihilation. The conviction of endless being has always had its place among the axioms of the human race, with only apparent denials enough, now and then, to manifest its universality. Herein the Scrip-

tures do not so much reveal as endorse an article in the universal creed.

As one in Christian land carries with him the elements and material of good or ill and joy or sorrow to the grave, so, according to revelation, he carries it over, and reaps as he has sowed. The Scriptures, when they speak without note or comment, say but one thing on this point. Indeed, up to this point, it may be said, the Protestant and Catholic Churches say but one and the same thing.

A division arises when we come to speak of the divine pardon of the penitent believer in Christ that remits all penalty, and of the divine grace that breaks the power of sin and passes one at death perfectly sanctified into instant and perfect blessedness. On the one theory, men eminent for honor and usefulness, and for godliness, too, are introduced at death to sufferings ineffable and amid surroundings indescribably dreadful, though they have ceased from sin and are fully assured of heaven at last. On the other theory, the dying saint has instant and ineffable glory among the spirits of just men made perfect. These two theories place two dying saints wide asunder on their entrance to the next world, and literally *toto cælo* from each other.

The idea is wholly foreign to the Word of God that any punishment or suffering awaits him who, by repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, has come into the state of justification, and thus passed to the better land. That justification is

total and absolute. The blood of Christ has cleansed him from all sin, and there is therefore no condemnation to him, no remnant of demerit for purgatorial suffering. The bloody sweat and agony of our Lord need no atoning supplement. Nor can we think of God as both pardoning and punishing the same sins—forgiving us our debts and collecting them too.

The Scriptures, as read by the Protestant Church, allow for no remedial, amendatory, or supplemental suffering for a child of God between the dying-bed and the gates of glory. Such an idea suggests two painful and repulsive thoughts: that the atonement is incomplete, and that man can bear, in part, his own sins in his own body, and so work out his own redemption jointly with Christ. The evangelical pulpit of Protestant Christendom says, with great constancy and unity, that there are no acts of pardon passed beyond the grave. As constantly and unitedly it says, that it is not by works of righteousness, but by mercy and grace in Christ alone, that sinful ones are saved.

Hence the Protestant, dying in the sweet peace of a child of God, departs fully conscious that he is going out of the circle of all human aid, and beyond all need of it. What sympathies may follow him he can imagine, but that any helpful ones will ever reach him he has no remotest expectation, as he has no remotest anticipation of ever needing them. It is enough that there comes to him the assurance, from the infinite Author of a completed salvation, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." It seems presumptuous in

us to volunteer aid for one who has departed this life under such a promise, and is in the actual enjoyment of such company on the other side.

It is a matter of literary curiosity, as well as of theological and religious interest, to notice on how solitary and frail a Scriptural thread this whole vast and fearful purgatorial system is suspended. Really there is but one passage that has any apparent or even exegetical pertinence; for what is said of the preaching of Christ to imprisoned souls of the times of Noah has no pertinence, even on the papal theory. If those souls were in purgatory, they were penitent and pardoned and assured of heaven, and were only awaiting the end of the due amount of suffering. They were only subjects of suffering, and not at all candidates for repentance and the acceptance of the gospel. They had accepted Christ, and were as truly his friends as any in heaven. On the purgatorial theory, this must have been their character, condition, and expectation. The bottom fact of this passage is, that those antediluvians had had the offer of Christ by Noah, that "preacher of righteousness," but were "disobedient," and were now in the prison of spirits, when St. Peter wrote, having failed of salvation.

A passage in Maccabees is the main and only pointed and obvious Scriptural support of this doctrine. Some exegetical and adroit uses are made of Matt. 5 : 25, 26; 12 : 32; 1 Cor. 3 : 10-15; 1 Pet. 3 : 19; and Rev. 21 : 27. But 2 Maccabees 12 : 32-46, is usually the main dependence. The case stands thus :

Judas Maccabeus engaged in battle with the Idumeans, and several Jews were killed. When they came to inter these, idolatrous votive offerings were found concealed on their persons, which they had taken as plunder in a previous victory over the Jamuites. This was a heinous sin under the Jewish law, Deut. 7 : 25, or, as the Romanist would say, a mortal sin. To purify the living from all contamination by this sin, and to appease the God of Israel, Judas made a collection of two thousand drachms of silver, and "sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin-offering."*

On this phrase the Douay version places the words, "a sacrifice for the sins of the dead," which is no translation of those two Greek words, nor yet a paraphrase, or even a gloss. It is an insertion or addition to the text of so much as refers to the dead. Moreover, the sin of those dead men was punishable with death. It was "mortal" to the Romanist, under which, unpardoned, one goes past purgatory to hell, from which there is no relief by "a sacrifice for the sins of the dead."

In the authorized version the final verse in this account reads thus: "And also in that he perceived that there was great favor laid up for those that died godly, it was a holy and good thought [to make the offering]. Wherefore he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they [the living] might be delivered from sin." In the Douay it is made to read thus: "And he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness

* Septuagint, ἀπαρίας ὑποίων.

had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." Here, again, the sin-offering made for all the living, that they might not suffer for the transgressions of others, is turned into a sacrifice for the benefit of the dead, and the "holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead" is introduced as new matter, not in the original Greek, but foreign to the text.

But, not to extend minute criticisms, it remains only to be said that this passage, so enlarged beyond the original, and so interpreted, is not from the accepted Bible, but from the Apocrypha. The Jews did not admit this book of Maccabees to the sacred canon; and among the early Christians it was rejected by Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, Hilary, Epiphanius, Gregory, and Gregory the Great, Jerome, Augustine, Rufinus, Cardinal Ximenes, Cajetan, Erasmus, and prominent councils.

Dr. Schaff says of the Apocryphal books: "They did not belong to the Hebrew canon; they were written after the extinction of prophecy; they are not quoted in the New Testament; they contain some Jewish superstitions, and furnish the Roman-catholics proof-texts for their doctrines of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the meritoriousness of good works."*

And Dr. Bissell, in his General Introduction to the Apocrypha, says: "The apostles used a version of the Old Testament which contained the Apocrypha, but

* Preface to the Apocrypha. By Edwin Cone Bissell, D. D.

with so careful an avoidance of the latter that it cannot with certainty be affirmed that in all their writings they made a single direct allusion to them.”*

In his Notes on this passage in Maccabees, he also says, emphatically, “There is not, as a matter of fact, the slightest evidence that any such doctrine as that of the Romanists relating to purgatory had any existence among the Jews at this time.”

Here, therefore, is our latest scholarship on the true reading of this famous text in Maccabees, that will leave it destitute of all reference to prayers for the dead.

This discussion has nothing to do, directly, with questions concerning the punishment of the lost, since purgatory contains only saints, who will all finally depart and leave it vacant. Yet, in tracing these lines of thought, side views have been constantly calling our attention to the predominant sentiments of the world on the condition and prospects of the unsaintly or impenitent dead.

One incidental and unsought issue, furnished by the investigation, is, that the great unrevealed religions of the world teach the final restoration of all men to happiness. It is left to Christianity alone to teach otherwise. Till a comparatively late period in the history of our race, the vote of the great religions of mankind has left the Christian sect in an almost imperceptible minority. Latterly our revealed religion has been tested to hold its ground, in the matter

* General Introduction to the Apocrypha, p. 51.

of future punishment, against affiliation with the older systems on the one side, and the new theories of scholars on the other.

A first probation for salvation by Christ, beyond the grave, for those who failed to receive it here; a second probation, for those whose chances were most adverse under the first; the sinful soul wasted and dwarfed unto extinction of being under penal suffering; abrupt and punitive annihilation—these are points more or less sharp and warm in recent theological discussions. These theories solicit Christian adoption and baptism by an exegetical handling of the Scriptures.

In handling the questions of sin and salvation as practical and personal ones, we have, this side the door of death, all needed divine aid to enter, just beyond, the gates of glory. It is wholly without revealed warrant to expect that aid beyond death; and for one to look for and lean on the human aid of the living when he may come into the regions beyond, and where the divine has ceased, is rashness in the extreme.

